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ABSTRACT

**GRANDPARENTING THE NEXT GENERATION:
FANNING THE FLAME OF FAITH**

by

James F. Kinsler

This quantitative, mixed-methods study explored the use of technology to enrich and enable grandparents' role as faith mentors for 6-12-year-old grandchildren. The literature review revealed a rich heritage of faith formation in Scripture and church tradition as more mature individuals within a kinship group nurtured the faith of the young. The examination of developmental theory and theorists supported the effective use of older individuals as mentors and examples for children. The analysis of technological-use trends for seniors and children revealed that a viable connection was possible between grandparents and grandchildren through technology. Applying the research and resources of Search Institute and Vibrant Faith Ministries in the intervention phase provided a platform to test the hypothesis of the study. The three major findings indicated a strong mutual affinity between grandparents and grandchildren, the viability of having grandparents serve as faith mentors, and the effectiveness of technology as a means of contact between grandparents and grandchildren. The results were encouraging and provided opportunities for further investigation in the convergence of faith formation, grandparenting, and the use of technology.

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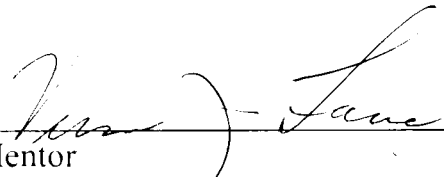
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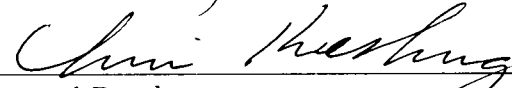
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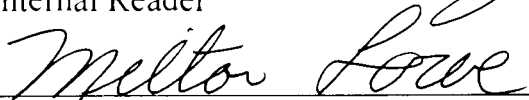
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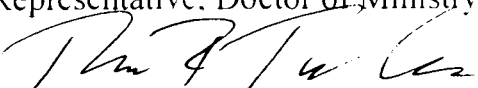
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I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.... I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. (2 Timothy 1:5)

These words from Paul to Timothy started me on the journey of exploration into grandparenting. I thank God for inspiring Paul and, through Paul, inspiring me. Like Paul I recognize the quest was not an individual pursuit but the result of many people of faith who supported me and fanned the flame of faith in me.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM

Introduction

The days of grandparents living next door or down the street from their grandchildren have long since disappeared for most families. Grandparents often live hundreds and even thousands of miles away from their grandchildren. Our culture brings many challenges and opportunities for the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren.

This dissertation focused on minimizing the barrier of physical distance between grandparents and grandchildren and maximizing the power and process of family faith formation through this God-ordained relationship by the use of technology. My personal story illustrates the point of using technology to build the bridge of relationship. When I was four years old, my father was deployed to Korea as a chaplain in the US Army. My two older sisters, my older brother, and I were separated from our father for two years. During that two-year period, my father would regularly send reel-to-reel tape recordings with stories and personal messages to our family.

After his two years away, my father returned from Korea. I did not recognize him when he first walked into the house. As a matter of fact, I was angry and defensive because I wondered why a strange man was hugging my mother. When he spoke, I recognized my father's voice and joyfully and tearfully joined my mother in his arms. Now, over fifty years after they were made, the tapes of his voice still give me comfort as I listen to them since his death.

The reel-to-reel tape recorder was advanced technology in 1959. It became a valuable tool in maintaining a close relationship with my father over long distances. I believe the computer and the ever-evolving world of technology with its varied applications can do far more than a reel-to-reel tape recorder in building and maintaining a relationship between grandparents and grandchildren as a conduit in the faith-formation process. The loving relationship between a grandparent and a grandchild is indeed one of the great wonders of God. I believe that relationship was meant to be a bridge in the relationship between God and the child. Technology can be an indispensable tool to build and maintain that bridge.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine how four faith-formation practices shared between grandparents and grandchildren through the use of technology over a six-week period impacted the grandchildren in the faith-formation process.

Research Questions

The application of technology in the faith-formation process is not new. The special bond between grandparents and grandchildren is an ageless cross-cultural phenomenon. The combining of faith formation, grandparents, and technology has far-reaching implications and raises some vital questions. This research project sought to answer these questions and apply the answers to build up the body of Christ.

Research Question #1

What were the grandparents' understandings, attitudes, and uses of faith-formational practices combined with technology prior to the six-week intervention?

Research Question #2

What changes in the grandparents were observed in their understandings, attitudes, and uses of faith-formational practices combined with technology after the six-week intervention?

Research Question #3

How did the six-week intervention impact the faith and relational perceptions of the grandchildren?

Definition of Terms

Technology, in the study, refers to a spectrum of devices and machines, as well as to the programs and applications, used in the transferring of information and ideas. Desktop and laptop computers, tablets, and handheld devices such as iPhones or smartphones are examples of technology.

Faith formation is the intentional process of passing along and inculcating the Christian faith from one person to another.

Faith-formation practices throughout this research paper will refer to four specific practices that have been identified by Vibrant Faith Ministries to have a positive impact on the spiritual development of children. Caring conversation is the practice of developing and nurturing a positive communication cycle between trusted adults and children that allows the children to feel secure in exploring vital topics of life, including faith. Family ritual and tradition describe those distinctive family customs that pass along the mores, memories, and accepted values of the family. Bible story is the reading and sharing of scriptural accounts at age-appropriate levels in order to convey knowledge of

the Bible and the love of God. Prayer is the final, faith-formational practice and focuses on the ability to connect with God in personal communication.

Ministry

Grandparents delight in showing other people pictures of their grandchildren. Grandparents today, instead of pulling out their wallet or purse, pull up their cell phone and show more pictures of their grandchildren than one can imagine. The purpose of this project was to capture the innovative and motivated mind of adoring grandparents to enrich the faith-formation process of their grandchildren. With a generation who has been raised on technology, a convergence of powerful forces emerges that the Holy Spirit can use to enrich the lives of and bring the kingdom of God to both ends of the spectrum.

The literature review identified two primary sources for use in the intervention. The first resource was the *40 Developmental Assets* from Search Institute. The second was *Vibrant Faith at Home* from Vibrant Faith Ministries.

The target population was grandparents from Lutheran Church by the Lake, McCormick County, South Carolina. McCormick is a rural county located in northwestern South Carolina along the Savannah River. The total population of the county is 9,943 people ("McCormick County"). The two dominate features of the county are the Sumter National Forest and Clark Hill Reservoir/Thurmond Lake. Over 85 percent of the county is forested and includes over five hundred miles of shoreline along Thurmond Lake ("South Carolina Lakes and Waterways").

The Lutheran Church by the Lake is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America which has 325 members. The congregation was organized in 1997.

The average age of the congregation is 68 years old. The membership role contains only eight individuals 21 years of age or younger.

The majority of members, 91percent, are retired and live in Savannah Lakes Village. Savannah Lakes Village is an active retirement community with 1,850 residents and was established in 1995. People are attracted to the area by the mild climate, golf courses, and 72,000 acres of water in Thurmond Lake. Many of the members of Lutheran Church by the Lake have moved from the northeast and Midwest to retire, making Lutheran Church by the Lake a prime field for a study on grandparenting and the use of technology to connect with grandchildren who live away.

These grandparents had to meet three criteria. The first was a desire to enrich their relationships with their grandchildren. The second was a willingness to share their faith with their grandchildren. The third was openness to the use of technology as a tool to accomplish the first two criteria.

The project itself took place in three phases. The first was the pre-intervention assessment stage. The participants took inventories and participated in interviews to establish a baseline for the study. These inventories explored the nature of the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren, the presence or lack of faith-formational practices, and the level of technological involvement in the relationship.

The next phase was the six-week intervention that took place at Lutheran Church by the Lake. During the six weeks, a ninety-minute seminar was held once a week. Each seminar had educational, practice, assimilation, and feedback segments. *Vibrant Faith @ Home* was the primary Web-based resource used in the educational component. The six faith practices identified by Vibrant Faith are caring conversation, ritual/tradition, Bible

story, prayer, serving others, and learning about faith. The first four practices fit best with the design of the study. Each week one of these four practices was the focus of the seminar. These practices can be accessed through the Web-site by clicking on one of the first four tabs at the top of the home page.

The third phase involved post-intervention assessment with the grandparents and the grandchildren utilizing inventories and interviews. These results were compared with the pre-intervention findings to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. Finally, evaluation and refinement of the process took place. The faith-enrichment process between grandparents and their grandchildren through the use of technology could have wide appeal and application. It can be used individually, congregationally, denominationally, interdenominationally, and internationally.

Context

The results of this research project can be placed in the context of any arena with loving grandparents, growing grandchildren, and the availability of technology. The findings are not restricted to any particular faith community nor limited by culture, and distance is not a factor. Technology can be a conduit that connects grandparents and grandchildren as the Holy Spirit breathes new life into the faith of both the grandchild and the grandparent.

The life-giving understanding of the vital nature of the grandparent/grandchild relationship in the hands of a denominational publishing house has far-reaching possibilities. Resources could be developed to facilitate faith formation nurtured in the natural mentoring of grandparents. Young lives could be touched using the relational bridge between grandparents and grandchildren with the assistance of technology.

Grandparents utilized the classrooms of a local church to gather to gain experience with new devices foreign to them so they could connect with their grandchildren. These gadgets, once so strongly resisted, are now embraced. The reason is simple. Technology helps them share the love of the God who has embraced them with the ones they want to embrace the most in the entire world: their grandchildren. Technology can be used to help span the distance between generations as well as the distance between heaven and earth.

Methodology

This project used an explanatory, mixed-methods study. The first phase included an explanatory, pre-intervention inventory to establish a baseline in each of the three spheres of the study: faith formation, relational enrichment, and technological utilization. Researcher-designed quantitative questionnaires used limited-response questions and Likert scales. The grandparents filled out the questionnaires at the first intervention seminar.

One piece of the pre-intervention phase involved Search Institute's *40 Developmental Assets*. A preliminary presentation utilized the *40 Developmental Assets* as an instruction and motivational tool. The purpose of the survey of assets was to inform the participants of the importance of the assets and help them see how the study could bolster the assets in their lives of their grandchildren.

The second phase of the research project was the intervention. During the six-week intervention period, the grandparents met for a ninety-minute seminar once a week. Each seminar dealt with one of the four faith-formational practices identified by Vibrant Faith Ministries.

Each seminar had four components: education, practice, assimilation, and feedback. Each weekly seminar included educational time for presentation of faith-formation practices and related technological techniques. Once the concepts were presented, the grandparents practiced the applicable skills. Each seminar ended with assimilation exercises, emphasizing the technological connection with the participating grandchild for the coming week. Therefore each of the three spheres of the study (faith-formational, relational, and technological) received consideration during each weekly seminar. Finally, the participants gathered in a focus group to provide qualitative feedback on the session.

The grandparents participated in online journaling to document their interactions during the intervention phase. This qualitative measure captured the dynamic interactions between grandparents and grandchildren. The journal was a source of outcomes and a source of mutual support and encouragement as participants shared with each other at the next week's seminar gathering.

The final phase of the study was the post-intervention assessment. Once again, it included quantitative and qualitative measures. The quantitative measure incorporated a researcher-developed scaled questionnaire. The purpose was to compare the pre- and post-intervention results to ascertain any change.

The qualitative technique of a guided discussion gathered anecdotal accounts of the outcomes of the intervention. Prior to the guided discussion, the grandparents received a questionnaire with open-ended questions to ask their grandchildren concerning the intervention. Focusing on the results of the interview with the grandchild, a guided

discussion followed. The transcript produced a list of outcomes, which were categorized, charted, and analyzed.

Participants

The primary participants in the study were grandparents and their grandchildren. The requirements for grandparents to participate were that they had to have a desire to be faith mentors for their 6-12-year-old grandchildren, live at least twenty miles away from them, and have a willingness to use technology to bridge the distance. The grandchildren had to have the permission of their parents to participate. Parents of the children were not direct participants but played a supportive role in the process.

Instrumentation

The project used several instruments. All the instruments were researcher developed except the *40 Developmental Asset Survey* by the Search Institute. They fell into four categories. First were the pre-intervention baseline instruments. Second was the intervention instruments, those materials used during the six-week period. Third were the post-intervention response instruments. The fourth was instruments to address the intervening variables.

The baseline instruments discovered the starting place of the participants in the three spheres of the project. They covered faith formation, relational factors, and technological proficiency. The instruments of evaluation included a survey instrument and structured interview.

The intervention instruments consisted of researcher-designed seminar lesson plans and the use of an online journal by the participating grandparents and grandchildren. The lesson plans covered the four faith-formational practices and

technological applications. The use of the Vibrant Faith *at* Home Web site was an essential component of the intervention process. The final step in the intervention was the completion of the exit interview.

Variables

The study had dependent, independent, and intervening variables. The dependent variables were the interaction between grandparents and grandchildren, the faith formation that took place, and the faith practices. The independent variables were the techniques and technologies presented and used during the intervention.

Several intervening variables intrinsic in the study were due in large part to working with a three-generational population. One of the primary intervening variables was parents. Parents have the legal authority over their children, while grandparents have a powerful relationship of influence. Grandparents and grandchildren signed a consent form developed for the study. Parents authorized the participation of their children by signing the same form. The permission form also outlined the purpose and scope of the study (see Appendix A)

Other intervening variables were the number and age of grandchildren. To limit this variable, the age of the grandchildren ranged from 6-12 years old. No limit was put on the number of grandchildren that could participate as long as they were within the appropriate age span. The presence of children from blended and broken families was also an intervening variable.

The complexity of grandparenting situations increased the number of intervening variables. The gender of the participating grandparents was one of the intervening

variables. Single grandmothers, single grandfathers, and grandparent couples participated in the study. The participating grandchildren could not live with their grandparents.

Furthermore, the use of technology brought a number of factors into play. The spectrum of technologies was an important variable to be considered. The proficiency of the users, in addition to their attitude toward technology, had to be taken into account.

Data Collection

During the preparatory phase, I developed and distributed recruitment and explanatory materials for grandparents and grandchildren. The goal was to recruit ten participating grandparent/grandchild pairs. Following the recruitment, the pre-intervention surveys established a baseline for comparison.

The intervention phase was a six-week process. The primary means of data collection were the blog for participants and weekly feedback forums that concluded each seminar. An online blog reinforced the technological sphere of the study and served as an efficient means of data collection.

Post-intervention assessments used qualitative and quantitative instruments. The participants responded to the final quantitative assessment tools addressing formational practices, relational strength, and technological proficiency. These results gave a comparison between the pre- and post-intervention inventories.

The final layer of evaluation came through qualitative interactive processes between grandparents and grandchildren. During the sixth week, each grandparent conducted an open-ended interaction with his or her grandchild via virtual conferencing. The grandparents made notes of the interaction. The purpose was twofold: to generate

reviewable data on their experience in the study and to reinforce the overall purpose of the experience.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data of this mixed-methods study came in three layers. The first layer utilized a quantitative comparison of the pre- and post-intervention assessment inventory of faith-formational, relational, and technological considerations. The use of comparative assessment inventories gauged the impact of the intervention.

The second layer of data analysis transpired during the intervention. The monitoring of the grandparents' online journaling was a source of valuable information. Data analysis incorporated categorizing responses, identifying themes, and weighting the results.

The final layer of data analysis combined a qualitative analysis of the pre-intervention, semi-structured interview and the post-intervention, semi-structured group discussion. The analysis of these two interactions gave a clear picture of the participants' perceptions of the impact of the intervention. The analysis of the data took place by categorizing responses, identifying themes, and weighting the results.

Generalizability

This study has applications and implications for any grandparent with access to technology and the ability to communicate with a grandchild. The techniques and processes are applicable on the denominational level, in congregations, or by individuals. The two-hour segmentation of the intervention allows various presentation schedules: six-week sequential classes, two/three day-retreat, or a concentrated seminar.

Theological Foundation

St. Paul recognizes the powerful and positive impact of grandparents passing on the faith to their grandchildren:

I thank God whom I serve with a clear conscience, as did my fathers, when I remember you constantly in my prayers. As I remember your tears, I long night and day to see you, that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you. Hence I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control. (2 Tim. 1:3-7, RSV)

The flame of faith jumps from the grandmother Lois to the daughter Eunice, to the grandson Timothy, and ultimately reaches through the generations to present-day believers. Generations of Christians are reminded to rekindle the gift of God.

To extinguish a wood fire thoroughly requires pouring water on it and scattering the logs so they do not have contact with one another. In today's society, many families are scattered. The dispersion of the family increases the difficulty of passing along faith from one generation to another.

The earliest pages of Scripture convey the story of how God created humankind in his image: "God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth'" (Gen. 1:27-28). This account of creation is a reminder to believers that "human beings hold a special position in the created order" (McConnell, Orona, and Stockley 14). Christians gain greater understanding of the importance God places on children when they realize, "God's first recorded words to Adam and Eve are a blessing, a blessing involving children" (May and

Stonehouse 26). The passing on of God's blessing through the generations continues to be a priority for the people of God.

The faith of Israel passed from one generation to the next around the family table at the Passover celebration. The head of the household shared the story of God's marvelous deliverance to those who gathered around the table. Through the simple use of symbolic food and a dynamic story, the exodus became real as the family not only remembered but participated in the freeing of God's people. The faith was given and received in a simple ceremony and through the power of relationship.

Religious festivals played an important role in the transferring of the faith of Israel, but a more essential component was the daily actions of God's people. In Deuteronomy, Moses makes the everyday repetition of God's word within the routines of family life the locus of religious instruction: "Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise" (Deut. 6:7). The passing on of the faith was as regular as breathing, waking, sleeping, walking, and talking.

Jesus literally held up children as an example of the kingdom of God. In each of the synoptic gospels (Matt. 19:14; Mark 9:36-37; Luke 18:16-17), Jesus used children as a personification of a faithful follower. While the disciples wanted to dismiss the children, Jesus blessed them and embraced them.

John Chrysostom, one of the early Church fathers, advocated the family as a "sacred community" or "little church" (*On Marriage and Family* 57). He encouraged parents to play a vital role in the faith formation of their children. At home parents read Scripture, prayed, and set an example for the children in daily life.

Centuries later Martin Luther unwittingly spurred on the Reformation as he gathered with his family and friends around the table of the Black Cloister, the former monastery where they lived, and talked of life, theology, faith, and family. Volumes of *The Table-Talk* written by Luther's students and dinner guests captured these dinner conversations. The relationship to one another and to God was nurtured through the fellowship and sharing around the table. Luther also used a new technological innovation called the printing press to fire the Reformation. One of the results of his utilization of the printing press was the *Small Catechism*, a short primer of foundational Christian beliefs to be taught by the head of the household to the members of the family.

In each successive generation, an individual fanned the flame of faith through the utilization of new ideas and technology, such as of John Wesley, Horace Bushnell, Billy Graham, and James Dobson. God has a way of calling forth men and women to meet the challenges faced by the people of God. Two of the consistent factors throughout the centuries have been the use of the extended family as a catalyst to spark the flame of faith and the use of technology as a tool to hand the torch of faith to the next generation.

Today's culture of dispersion presents unique challenges to passing on the faith. Technology is available to meet the need of communal communication and relational faith. Technology will never replace relationships and personal contact, but it can enhance the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren through available contact.

Technology can be used to receive the spark of faith from grandparents as Timothy did. Like the ancient Hebrews, people can tell the story of faith in a family setting utilizing modern communication devices to overcome physical distance.

Emulating Luther, they can combine the newest advancements in technology with the old, old story of faith.

Recently my wife and I were overjoyed to have our two grandsons move within thirty miles of us. My grandsons' other grandparents are not so fortunate when considering the proximity to their only two grandchildren. They are missionaries in South Africa. They have followed the call of Christ, which led them to be as far away as is physically possible from the grandchildren they love dearly.

A few weeks ago, as Christmas approached, I watched with great joy as their Grandma Sonnee Hines made cookies with them by video conferencing from South Africa. The same recipe, the same ingredients, and the same temperature in the oven were used, and the same smell was given off even though they were thousands of miles apart.

Through the bridge of technology, the pathway of relationship was built and the love of Christ was shared between grandparent and grandchild. Their names could have been Lois and Timothy, but they were Sonnee, Jonathan, and Matthew. They could have been a Hebrew family gathered for the Passover meal, but they were a modern family baking Christmas cookies even though they were separated by oceans and time zones. They could have been Luther and his family gathered around his table, but they were two boys and a grandmother gathered around ovens on the opposite sides of the globe. The physical separation was a challenging situation, which has now become less of a struggle thanks to an unfolding technology and a commitment to relationship.

Overview

Chapter 2 reviews literature in the area of cross-generational family faith sharing as it applies to ritual, story, and repeated faith practices that transfer spiritual commitment

through familiar relationships. Chapter 3 presents methodology used in this study. Chapter 4 reports the findings of the research intervention. Chapter 5 presents the analysis, applications, and additional research questions that have surfaced as a result of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE

Introduction

The writer of Hebrews describes the faith-formation process in the terms of a race run in front of a heavenly cloud of witnesses:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. (Heb. 12:1-2a)

In the summer of 2012, the XXX Olympiad took place in London. The Olympic flame arrived as the torch was passed from one runner to the next. The Olympic cauldron was lit and burned brightly during the games. The athletes from across the globe competed for gold medals in front of a great cloud of witnesses.

An interesting, but not unexpected or unprecedented, phenomenon once again took place at the Olympics. Great Britain, the host country, won more medals than they had in decades. Many factors contributed to the outcome, but the influence of being the home team cannot be overlooked. The athletes from the United Kingdom were encouraged and energized by competing in front of the wildly crazy cloud of witnesses that cheered them on.

The problem this study addressed is the process of passing on, not the Olympic flame from one runner to the next, but the flame of faith from one generation to the next. The specific focus has been on how the role of grandparents can enhance the faith-formation process through the use of technology. Like athletes competing in the Olympics whose family cannot be present to cheer them on because of the distance from

their homes to the site of the competition, not all grandparents live in close proximity to their grandchildren.

In the modern world, technology has become an indispensable tool that can be used to help build a virtual home-field advantage in the faith-formation process. Grandparents can be an important part of the home crowd to encourage and inspire grandchildren to grow in faith. Technology is the means of bringing a virtual cloud of witnesses to the vital field of faith formation. The study examines how four faith-formation practices can be adapted to technology so grandparents and grandchildren can bridge the gap of physical distance and grow in their relationship with God and one another over a six-week period.

Theological Foundation

The process of passing on the flame of faith from one generation to the next can be traced in the biblical texts and the traditions of the Church. The role the family and home play in nurturing faith is one of the central points of transmission in the progression of individuals' spiritual development. While parents have the primary authority over and responsibility for children within the family, grandparents are in a position of significant influence. This study looked at grandparents' participation in the faith-formation process of children in the context of the extended family.

The Conceptual Context of Children in Scripture

The biblical view of children was in tension with the cultural milieu of the Greco-Roman world. The Hellenistic culture had a polarized understanding of children. At one end of the spectrum was the sense of value as revealed in ancient letters, funeral inscriptions, and the state's recognition of the next generation as a part of the economy,

culture, and military (Wiedemann 36). The contrasting perception of children can be seen in the understanding that “childhood was a state of immaturity to outgrow” (Gundry-Volf 32) and the “power of life and death” (32) that a Roman father had over his children in the practice of “exposing it” (casting it out in a public place; 33). The tug-of-war of the place of children in society can be seen in Scripture as well.

Children in the Old Testament. The story of Abraham being called to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, on Mount Moriah, is a good example of this tension in the Old Testament: “Then God said, ‘Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you’” (Gen. 22:2, NIV). At first glance the passage seems to be blatantly against the idea of children having any value.

The call for human sacrifice should be understood in the context of the prevailing culture. The account of Abraham and Isaac would not bring about the outrage that is expressed today. The ethos of the age “gave virtually full power to the father over his son, whether he thought proper to imprison him, to scourge him, to put him in chains, and keep him at work in the fields, or to put him to death” according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus (387). The radical message that would have raised the eyebrows of the first hearers would have been one of God’s mercy, provision, and love.

This revolutionary message toward humanity is consistent in Scripture and begins with the earliest verses of Genesis:

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” (Gen. 1:26-28)

The creation story reveals “human beings hold a special position in the created order” (McConnell, Orona, and Stockley 14). A clear indication of the importance of children to God comes from the timing and content of the first biblical blessing: “God’s first recorded words to Adam and Eve are a blessing, a blessing involving children” (May and Stonehouse 26). Families hold a high priority in the created order.

The emphasis expressed in the prose of Genesis and the poetry of the Psalms conveys the distinctive place of humanity in the cosmos:

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. (Ps. 8:3-5)

The unique and blessed relationship between God and the created being of humanity is taken to a new level in the psalmist’s lyric declaration: “For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works” (Ps. 139:13). The theme of God knowing, calling, and even naming a child in the womb is not unusual in the divine drama of Scripture as seen in the case of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah (Isa 49:1; Jer.1:5).

Children in the Gospels. The climactic expression of God’s extraordinary love affair with humanity as a whole and children in particular is captured in the birth narrative of Jesus in Luke 1. Mary, who was pregnant with Jesus, visited her pregnant kinswoman, Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John the Baptizer. The baby leaped in Elizabeth’s womb when she was greeted by Mary. The in utero exaltation of the

incarnate, yet unborn, Jesus by his likewise womb-bound cousin, John, is astonishing in its implications. First is the simple fact that God was at work in unborn babies.

The second is a theological tsunami: God was coming in the flesh. The Incarnation is, at the same time, the cornerstone and the stumbling block of the Christian message. In order for Jesus to be the great teacher, preacher, healer, and savior, he first became a baby and a child. God not only loves and adores babies and children, God became one. Jesus was first a fetus, then went through the birth canal to become a viable infant, grew as a baby, developed into a child, matured as an adolescent, and emerged from the waters of the Jordan at his baptism to begin his ministry as a man.

Jürgen Moltmann explains the vast nature and theological volume of the incarnational wave:

In Jesus, we are introduced to an amazing new dimension of the dignity of the divine image.... Our uniqueness as human beings in the created order, therefore, is based on the image of God, on the event of the incarnation of God to reconcile the world, and the promise of his coming kingdom, thereby bringing together all human history. (20)

God validates the human experience of growing and maturing as an individual from conception to adulthood and ultimately death itself by going through the process: “The Son of God who is with the Father from eternity nurses at His mother’s breasts, is crucified, and dies” (Luther, *Luther’s Works* 22: 352). The human experience was eternally changed as the eternal God became human.

Jesus gave further credibility to the importance of children not only in his person but also in his practice. When his disciples discussed who was the greatest among their group Jesus used children as examples of greatness through humility (Matt. 18:1-5; Mark 9:33-37). Contrasted to the prevailing culture, this accepting attitude toward children is

even more pronounced: “Whereas in the Greco-Roman world comparing an adult to a child was highly insulting and nowhere in Jewish literature are children set up as examples of righteousness” (Schoelles 44). Jesus shocked the disciples by setting a mere child in the place of honor beside him (May and Stonehouse 40). The welcoming of children by Jesus was not an isolated incident; it was integral to his teaching about the kingdom of God.

Children played a prominent role in the landscape of the Gospel narratives. Jesus reprimanded his disciples for trying to limit their access to him by saying, “Let the little children come to me; do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matt. 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16). The healings and exorcisms Jesus performed on children are examples of his primary concern for them (Mark 5:22-23, 35-43; 7:24-30; 9:14-29). In the scenes of miraculous feedings found in all four Gospels, Matthew mentions that women and children (*paidia*) were also present (14:21), and John 6:9 specifies a “little boy” supplied the food (Horn and Martens 92). These passages are reminders that “children are not proto-Christians. They are recipients of the kingdom as they are now” (Schoelles 45). Jesus as the Word incarnate revealed God’s glorious love in speaking and living a word of acceptance, healing, and worth to the children he encountered.

Children in the letters of Paul. While children are tightly woven into the interactions of Jesus in the Gospels, the rest of the New Testament has little to compare with this emphasis. Although the Epistles make a number of metaphorical references to children, they mention actual children rarely and only in relation to parents (Bunge 48). The household codes of Paul (Eph. 6; Col. 3) are a prime example. Paul’s dual

admonition addresses children and fathers, saying, “Children, obey your parents,” and, “Fathers, do not provoke your children.” While these codes were not uncommon in the Greco-Roman world, the Christian application of the codes make subtle, yet significant, distinctions. One striking feature is that adults spoke to children directly as active rather than passive agents (Miller-McLemore 86). This insight was an important step in personhood for children rather than seeing them as their father’s property.

The second is even more remarkable. Where Greco-Roman texts give the father ultimate authority, in the Epistles God was the object of obedience. The New Testament’s view inevitably modified ancient ideas of ownership—that parents own children—and unsettled parental authoritarianism (87). The shift in ultimate obedience from an earthly father to God as heavenly Father can be derived from Jesus’ teachings. This transferal of allegiance is reflected in Jesus teaching his disciples to pray, “Our Father” (Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:2), when addressing God in prayer, and his example of praying, “Abba, Father” (Mark 14:16), in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Paul took the relationship to God as Father to a logical extension (Rom. 8:12-17; Gal. 4:1-7), using the household codes as an illustration of an individual’s relationship with Christ: “For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!...’ we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:15-17). In the Christian household, all members, children and parents, are obedient to the one who is father of all, God.

God was not only a heavenly Father, the formal head of the household, and holder of legal power and authority, God was “Abba Father.” This term of endearment reflected

familiarity and intimacy. It was the equivalent of a child calling their father, “Daddy” (Evans 41). As a result, a child’s relationship and obedience to the head of the household was based not only on the legal authority of social structure but even more on the powerful authority of love: “This admonishment to obedience is not mere religious legitimatization but places their obedience in the framework of one’s relationship to Christ” (Schoelles 46). The revolutionary nature of the understanding of loving obedience is that it applies equally to the child and the parent.

The Family as a Faith Incubator in Scripture

The family is the cornerstone of culture. As a fetus has nine months to develop within the safety of the womb, so a healthy family provides a safe environment for children as they mature. A family is a source of insulation from harm, incubation for development, and instruction for learning: “Foundational to all theory on the biblical concept of the family is the Jewish teaching that the home is more important than the synagogue. In Jewish tradition, the center of religious life has always been the home” (Wilson 216). The centrality of the family is particularly evident in the process of faith formation in Scripture: “It is clear that in the world of biblical faith, the family is the primary unit of meaning which shapes and defines reality” (Brueggeman 18). The family hearth is the faith incubator of the people of God.

Family in the Old Testament. The emphasis on the home and family as the primary instruments of spiritual development begins with some of the earliest and most important teachings of Israel. Deuteronomy 6, the *Shema*, Hebrew for *hear*, makes a clear statement to the centrality of the family:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all

your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deut. 6:4-9)

The confessional statement, “Hear, O Israel,” proclaims the distinctiveness of the faith of Israel against the cult of Baal. Even the name Israel is reflective of the struggle to remain true to God.

Part of the teaching process that took place in every Hebrew household was recounting the story of Jacob. Genesis 32: 22-28 tells how Jacob became Israel, “the one who struggled with God” (vs. 28). To be a child of Israel was more than a biological affirmation of ancestry; this distinction was a significant spiritual aspect of being the namesake of the God wrestler. Each day was a process of training. The repetition of the *Shema* strengthened the children of Israel’s connection and commitment to their God.

The *Shema* uses a fascinating word for the process of imprinting the story of God’s action on the next generation. The Hebrew is *shanan*. It is translated in the NIV as *impress* and in the NRSV as *recite*. In the Old Testament, the word is used only nine times. Out of those nine times, the intensive form of the verb appears only once—in the *Shema*:

Shanan is normally translated “sharpen.” But used in the intensive form, as it is here, *shanan* has a stronger sense. Related to the Hebrew noun for tooth (i.e., incisor), it could here mean to “incise” or “carve into.” Other scholars think that perhaps the word means “repeat,” which is certainly not a contradictory idea. (Friedeman 23)

A picture that comes to mind that captures the process of transferring information in an indelible way is etching. The original image is carved onto a plate and then is reproduced as it is impressed on other surfaces. The dynamic and distinctive story of God’s love as

understood by Israel was first carved into the lives of the patriarchs and then must be impressed upon the hearts and minds of succeeding generations through the family.

The etching of Israel's story is true of the *Shema* and also of their deliverance from Egypt as recounted in Exodus:

Moses said to the people, "Remember this day on which you came out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, because the Lord brought you out from there by strength of hand; no leavened bread shall be eaten. Today, in the month of Abib, you are going out.... Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a festival to the Lord.... You shall tell your child on that day, 'It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.' It shall serve for you as a sign on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead, so that the teaching of the Lord may be on your lips; for with a strong hand the Lord brought you out of Egypt." (Exod. 13:3-4, 7-9)

The Hebrew people were enjoined to keep the mighty acts of God fresh in the minds of their children through ritual (observance of festivals), recitation (on the lips), and reminders (signs upon hands, foreheads, and door posts). The locale where the three-strand cord of faith is woven together is the family.

The concept of the family being the locus of religious development is reinforced by the Hebrew word for parent, *horeh*. The etymology and application are detailed by Marvin R. Wilson:

The noun *horeh*, like *torah* ("instruction" as well as the first five books of the Bible), appears to be derived from the verb *varah*, which means "cast," "shoot," "throw," "direct." (*Torah* thus properly means what is "cast forth," hence the idea of "instruction," "teaching," "direction for life.") Accordingly, as priest in his family, the *horeh* ("parent") is to provide *torah* ("instruction") just as the priest expounded the Torah of Moses within the holy Temple. (216)

After the exile the rabbis began to refer to the home as a "*miqdash me'at*; that is, a 'small sanctuary' or 'miniature temple'" (Friedman 25). This understanding emphasizes the practice of the family being central to the process of faith formation for the Hebrew

people. The expectation of the rabbis was that the Hebrew home should be viewed, much like the tabernacle, as a private sanctuary for religious observances, including the worship of God as a house of prayer and the instruction of the Torah as a place of study (Anthony and Benson 37). The family dwelling was much more than just a place of shelter; it was the dwelling place of God.

Family in the Gospels. The New Testament, unlike the Old Testament, seems to make the assumption of family influence in the spiritual development of the child without many direct references. One of these veiled accounts is the story of Jesus going to the temple in Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover as a twelve-year-old boy. At twelve years of age, Jesus would, in Jewish terms, be beginning to make the transition into adult responsibility (Nolland 129). The process of etching the story of Israel's deliverance by God can be seen in the very significant background comments in these verses: "Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival" (Luke 2:41-42). The examination of the habits of Hebrew faith formation is very revealing.

"Now every year" and "as usual" are indications of the repetitive process of etching religious values in the very core of the character of Jesus. This holy habit took place on a regular and scheduled basis. The phrase, "His parents," reveals that it happened within the context of family. "The festival of the Passover" references the Hebrew religious ritual that set the event apart in the minds and lives of those who participated. Passover was a community celebration. While the whole Jewish community celebrated the Passover, they celebrated as family units.

Another significant point of this story is related to the nuclear family within the context of a larger extended family or clan:

When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. (Luke 2:43-44)

In today's culture Mary and Joseph would be arrested for neglect, but the Jewish culture of Jesus' day was very different: "They [the parents of Jesus] did not know he was missing when they left the city because their assumption was that he would be among the relatives and neighbors" (Horn and Martens 77). The social structure in which Jesus was raised was that of a network of identity and caring: "His parents did not think much of it at all—the extended family was a real part of Jesus' family" (79). This situation is a small, but clear, window into the nuanced character of the historic Hebraic family structure.

Two words are translated as *family* in Hebrew—*mishpaha* and *bayith*: "The broader, *mishpaha*, usually translated 'family,' means family only in the widest sense in which we use the word term family" (Grant 12). Carol Meyers makes a pertinent distinction:

The *mishpaha* was a group of at least partly related family units that settled a given area, the nucleus of the agricultural village. Not all members would have been related by blood, though many would have been, but all would have been committed to the same territory and to shared economic and military effort. (13)

While the *mishpaha* is the broader and more inclusive term, *bayith* has a much more narrow understanding: "The more intimate grouping is designated by *bayith*, household, or *beth abh*, the father's house" (Grant 12). Johannes Pedersen reiterates the translation of *bayith*: "represents kinship in its most intimate sense" (48). The multilayered fabric of

Hebrew society reflected the life experience of Jesus as he traveled to Jerusalem. The nuclear family (*bayith*), the extended family (*mishpaha*), and the religious institutions all worked together to shape and form identity.

The cultural layer of religious institutions can be seen at work in the fact that Jesus was found in the temple talking with the religious leaders: “After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions” (Luke 2:46). Not only the village life and family experience helped to shape the faith life of the boy Jesus; the whole cultural context of Jewish life was a powerful influence.

This family and cultural milieu leads to a delightful dilemma for all parents reflected in the faith formation of their children. Mary and Joseph gave the adolescent Jesus enough freedom to begin worrying about the choices he was making. After they discovered he was not where they expected him to be, they became concerned. When the frantic parents of Jesus finally track him down after three days, they found him in the temple. They reprimanded him, saying, “Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety” (Luke 2:48a). Jesus’ reply is the classic quote, “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:48b). While the declaration most certainly has a powerful theological application in relationship to Jesus’ claim of being the Son of God, it has a lesser but important implication in the process of family faith formation.

Jesus had matured into being a young man who recognized the direct relationship he had with his true Father, God. At the age of twelve, Jesus publicly stated his faith in and bond to God. He recognized the distinction between his earthly father, Joseph, and

his heavenly Father, YHWH. In essence, Jesus was the perfect confirmation student. He had the faith of Israel inculcated into his own life. The faith-formation process worked as the Scripture states, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor” (Luke 2:52). The faith of his parents became his own, and he exhibited a direct relationship with God.

Like a good parent who picks the best school system for their children when moving to a new town, God placed his Son, Jesus, in the very best learning environment—the he faith-filled and loving nuclear family (*bayith*) of Mary and Joseph, the supportive and likeminded kinship network (*mishpaha*) of Nazareth, and finally the orthodoxy of Israel as taught in the temple. The account of the boy Jesus leaving his parents and remaining at the temple in Jerusalem captures the essence of spiritual development. At the center is the declaration of faith expressed in Luke 2:49b. An affirmation of faith and the resulting relationship with God is the goal of any formational efforts. The concentric circles of the nuclear family, the extended relational network, and the religious institution surrounded Jesus as he matured physically and spiritually.

Family in Acts and the Epistles. The book of Acts is the story of the early Church. Beginning in the second chapter, the post-Pentecost expansion of the Church is recorded with these words: “Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God...” (Acts 2:46). From that point on in Acts and the Epistles, the growth of the kingdom has two seed beds. They are the public places, such as the temple, and the personal space of the home:

When the phrase “house church” occurs in the New Testament, these passages are misinterpreted if only imagined as houses where churches

met for worship. In fact these house churches were clan or extended family spiritual gatherings (Acts 10:24-25; 16:14-15; 18:7-8; 21:8-9; Rom. 16:3-5; 1 Cor. 15-19; Col. 4:15; Phil. 1:2; John 1:10). In Acts, Luke celebrates that whole households came to faith. (Schoelles 51)

The household/family is fertile ground for spiritual growth in the New Testament.

Paul uses the family structure, headed by the father, as a metaphor for his ministry: “As you know, we dealt with each one of you like a father with his children, urging and encouraging you and pleading that you lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory” (1 Thess. 2:11). The inference is clear: One of the father’s primary duties is the passing on of the faith to the children of the family.

This inference becomes explicit in Titus: “The elders are chosen on the basis of ‘having believing children’ (*tekna echon pista*), who are not debauched or ‘unsubmissive’ (*anypotakta*) (1:6)” (Horn and Martens 81). The expectations for a godly life included mothers as well as fathers: “Titus 2:4 encourages ‘young women’ ... to love their husbands and their children, and be good household managers in order that God’s name may not be ‘blasphemed’” (81). In listing the attributes of a faithful leader, Paul uses the households of deacons, deaconesses, and bishops as a test of their worthiness to serve. An important expectation of what is to take place in the household is not only to have well behaved children but *believing* children.

From Generation to Generation—Faith Formation in Scripture

The priority of passing on the faith is consistent throughout Scripture. In the Old Testament the covenantal faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob passes from generation to generation. The New Testament tells how the flame of faith in Jesus of Nazareth becomes a blazing belief in Jesus the Christ as Savior and Lord. Before examining how faith was passed from one generation to the next, a working definition of faith is needed. Karen-

Marie Yust provides a concise definition: “Faith is not a set of beliefs; nor is it a well-developed cognitive understanding of all things spiritual. It is an act of grace, in which God chooses to be in relationship with humanity” (4). Yust’s definition is consistent with the biblical witness of a God who initiates the relationship and reaches out to a sinful humanity.

The story of God’s interaction with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is preparation for and a precursor of God’s incarnational intervention through Jesus, the Christ:

Martin Luther derived his idea that faithful persons need to be *theodidacti* (persons taught by God) from his careful reading of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. The Hebrew prophet Isaiah declared to the Israelites, “All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the prosperity of your children” (Isa. 54:13). The later prophet, Jeremiah, spoke of how God would put God’s teachings in every person’s heart (Jer. 31:33-34), and the Christian gospel writer, John, recalled these words when he wrote, “It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God’” (John 6:45). When we think of our children and ourselves as *theodidacti* who have been gifted with faith by a gracious God, we stand in a long line of people whom God has embraced as spiritual learners through the ages. (Yust 5)

The primary focus of the *theodidacti* in Scripture is on the relationship of the believer with God as person, rather than a set of instructions to achieve right ideas about God.

This emphasis on relationship with God becomes obvious through the encounters God has with the distinctive servants of the Lord throughout the holy narrative. The pattern starts with Abram (Gen. 12), continuing with Moses (Exod. 3), Joshua (Josh. 1), Samuel (1 Sam. 3), Elijah (1 Kings 18), Isaiah, (Isa. 6), Jeremiah (Jer. 1), Mary (Luke 1), Paul (Acts 9), Peter (Acts 10), and, finally John in the Revelation. God calls these patriarchs, prophets, and apostles in a personal way. While each encounter is distinct, their relationship with God is at the root of their faithfulness.

The pattern of the personal encounter with God comes to a crescendo in Christ. In the Incarnation God acted most boldly, dramatically, and intimately. When Jesus gave the great declaration of divine dedication to humanity, “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (John 3:16), it was centered in a loving relationship.

When Jesus was tested by the lawyer concerning eternal life, Jesus helped him focus on what was of primary importance—his relationship with God:

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this and you will live.” (Luke 10:25-28)

The loving relationship with God and neighbor becomes more than an intellectual exercise or abstract concept as Jesus placed it into daily context with the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37). Concluding with the admonition, “Go and do likewise” (vs. 37). Jesus personalized the bond of belief and entreated the lawyer to put that relationship into practice.

Most importantly, Jesus was not only a messenger and teacher of God’s love: Jesus was the love of God in the flesh. This revelation made the “I Am” statements (John 6:22-51; 8:12; 10:7-11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1) radical and revolutionary. Jesus not only verbalized the unspeakable name of YHWH, but he applied that very name to himself. The power of God’s love is experienced relationally through Jesus Christ, who is the reality of God’s love in person. To be a disciple of Jesus means the follower is in love with the Savior and is living in a loving relationship with God.

Throughout the pages of the New Testament, the emphasis on following Jesus is frequently repeated. It can be demonstrated through a simple word study. The Greek verb *to follow (akoloutho)* appears ninety-one times. Even more striking, the Greek noun *disciple (mathetes)* appears 261 times (O'Connell 13). Paul conveyed the importance of his relationship with Christ to the disciples in Ephesus:

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:14-18)

Paul emphatically conveys that the loving relationship with Christ is esteemed over the knowledge of Christ. Because of Jesus, believers become doorways through which other people can meet the risen Christ (Albertson 11). Faith formation is more a process of introduction to Jesus than an understanding about Jesus.

Grandparents' Role in Faith Formation in Scripture

The continuity of faith is a challenge that faces the people of God throughout Scripture and the history of the church:

Many times, the first generation of Christians has a passion for Christ, and they are deeply committed to following him no matter the cost. The second generation of Christian believers becomes accustomed to grace, settle in comfortably, and live with low expectations for God's power. The third generation of Christians can be Christians in name only, following the family tradition rather than having a real relationship with the living Lord Jesus. (Albertson 8)

Cricket Albertson's observation can be applied to the Hebrew people as Moses prepared them to enter the Promised Land:

But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children—how you once stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, when the Lord said to me, "Assemble the people for me, and I will let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me as long as they live on the earth, and may teach their children so." (Deut. 4:9-10)

This passage charged those who saw firsthand the mighty acts of God in the Exodus experience with generational continuity of faith.

Both through story (Deut. 4:9) and instruction (Deut. 4:10), grandparents serve as a vital link in the process of passing along a living relationship with the living God. The subsequent generations are vulnerable to losing the identity of who they are and whose they are if they lose their connection to God. The identity of Israel as a whole and the individual person comes from an awareness and emphasis in Deuteronomy upon teaching and telling the faith tradition to the next generation (Biddle 98). The linkage and line of witness to the mighty acts of God is vital to maintaining the distinctive identity of God's holy people.

The negative implications of forgetting the covenantal love of God are expressed as well:

When you have had children and children's children, and become complacent in the land, if you act corruptly by making an idol in the form of anything, thus doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord your God, and provoking him to anger,... you will not live long on it. (Deut. 4:25)

As commentator Telford Work states, "When this generation's memories have faded and its descendants have been raised in ignorance, the future generations who find idolatry irresistible will learn anew that it is an eschatological dead end" (67). Thus, faithful grandparents are a key connection to the spiritual future of the extended family of Israel.

The joy and responsibility of grandparents can be seen in the scriptural expression of grandchildren being a blessing and reward for faithfulness to God: “But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children’s children, to those who keep his covenant and remember his commandments” (Ps. 103:17-18). The exuberant delight of the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is extolled: “Grandchildren are the crown of the aged, and the glory of children is their parents” (Prov. 17:6). The connection between the fear of the Lord and blessing of family finds full expression as the psalmist profusely extols:

Happy is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways. You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord. The Lord bless you from Zion. May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life. May you see your children’s children. Peace be upon Israel! (Ps. 128)

In the Old Testament, the perpetuation of Israel’s faith within the family and the blessing bestowed on a Jewish household are connected like olive shoots joined to the roots of the olive tree. In a culture that did not envisage the persistence of a soul after death, perpetuity was imagined through offspring and was thought of as the greatest blessing (Alter 452). The blessing came not only to the immediate family but also to the whole of Israel as the family of God.

The apostasy of Israel also had implications that rippled through the generations. The prophet Jeremiah addresses this unfaithfulness directly and bluntly: “Thus says the Lord: What wrong did your ancestors find in me that they went far from me, and went after worthless things, and became worthless themselves?” (Jer. 2:5). Using the phrase that has been connected with blessing, “your children’s children,” is now used to reflect

the negative consequences of disloyalty to God: “Therefore once more I accuse you, says the Lord, and I accuse your children’s children” (2:9). Whether for good or for ill, the faithfulness or rebelliousness of proceeding generations impact the faith of those who follow in these Old Testament passages.

In the New Testament, the clearest example of the influence of grandparents is in Paul’s second letter to his young protégé, Timothy. Paul warmly remembers how the faith of Lois flows to Timothy through his mother, Eunice and his grandmother, Lois. It is significant that Paul saw the faith in Jesus being passed from generation to generation. The faith that Timothy received within his Jewish and then Christian home has been paralleled with Paul’s own faithfulness to the God of his fathers. The typically Jewish stress upon family and forebears as the privileged bearers of divine revelation and direction of their children is behind this parallel (Quinn and Wacker 578). The intimate nature of the faith is seen in the connotations of *enokesen* or *lived*. The faith that is “dwelling” or “living” in Timothy literally means “to be at home” (Gloer 221). The faith that is at home in Timothy comes from the home that impacted his process of spiritual development.

The Use of Technology in Faith Formation in Scripture

I have a cartoon that is taped to my office door at the Lutheran Church by the Lake. The image is a classic picture of Moses standing before a burning bush holding the two stone tablets carved with the Ten Commandments. The caption under the picture simply says, “Neither of these tablets come with apps?” (Piraro 2012). In a technological society, this cartoon is worth a chuckle. The tablets that Moses held are not high-tech, but they are a result of the technology of the hammer and chisel.

The definition of technology is “1. Application of tools and methods; 2. Method of applying technical knowledge; 3. Machines and systems; 4. Sum of practical knowledge” (“Technology”). Using the basic nuances in the meaning of technology reveals that Scripture is full of technological applications used in the development of faith in the people of God. Every time and culture has distinctive technologies and applications.

The use of technology in the Old Testament. The thread of technology is present throughout the biblical narrative. Genesis 3 contains the story of Adam and Eve and the Fall in the garden. As they are being banished from their place of provision, a curious verse says God provides clothing for them: “And the Lord God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them” (Gen. 3:21). The first recorded use of technology in Scripture is by God. The garments are fashioned from existing material, skins, denoting a technological process of sewing. The application of this technology in the faith-formation process is to remind Adam and Eve that even though they have distanced themselves from God through their disobedience, God continues to cover them. Garments made of skins provide a testimony of hope that God is still involved in the affairs of humans (De La Torre 90). Adam and Eve relied on the provision and grace of God to clothe them. The passage makes a statement of the Creator’s continued care for the creation. The clothes, which warm and protect the first man and woman, were from the hand of the ultimate designer, God.

An almost identical theological dilemma is addressed in the story of Noah in Genesis 6-10, the sinfulness of humanity: “And God saw that the earth was corrupt” (Gen. 6:12). Rebellion is followed by the judgment of the Lord: “I have determined to

make an end of all flesh” (Gen. 6:13). The deliverance provided by God and achieved through the obedience of Noah comes about by the use of technology: “Make yourself an ark of cypress wood” (Gen. 6:14). God gave Noah detailed instructions (Gen. 6:14-16): a plan for the ark, including details of its building materials, design, and dimensions (Arnold 99). The crux of the story is once again the relationship with God, but the corollary of the narrative is the obedient use of technology to help maintain that relationship and bring about the survival of Noah and his family.

The opposite of these first two accounts takes place in Genesis 11, the tower of Babel. Here the technology is the essence of the rebellion as the mortals become self absorbed with their accomplishments and distanced from God: “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves” (Gen. 11:4). God’s judgment scatters the builders: “So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city” (Gen. 11:8). Redemption is not mentioned in this text, but “at least the prophets and NT look forward to a day when sin will be destroyed and perfect unity will be restored” (Wenham 246). Some scholars see the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 as the culmination of the Babel account and the hoped-for redemption, but the Genesis 11 account leaves the specter of judgment for human technology reaching beyond the divine intention.

The first three accounts from Genesis demonstrated that technology is value neutral. It reveals the glory of God or rebellion against God. The recurring theme is that technology is an integral part of every culture. Technology does not dictate the quality of the relationship with God in a particular civilization, but it does impact how that relationship is expressed.

The tabernacle is a prime example of technology being applied on a massive scale to impact the faith life of the community. The tabernacle was a reminder of the presence of the Lord in the midst of the nomadic tribes of Israel. Its building was an immense undertaking described in the Exodus 25-40. The materials list gives insight into the scope of this ancient marvel:

This is the offering that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze, blue, purple, and crimson yarns and fine linen, goats hair, tanned rams' skins, fine leather, acacia wood, oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, onyx stones and gems to beset in the ephod and for the breastpiece. (Exod. 25:3-7)

The tabernacle, the furnishings, and the vestments all had one purpose: to incorporate the faith of Israel into the daily lives of the people of God.

The placement of the tabernacle was literally a central concern as well: "The Israelites shall camp each in their respective regiments, under ensigns by their ancestral houses; they shall camp facing the tent of meeting on every side" (Num. 2:2). The tabernacle was at the heart of the Hebrew camp. It was a constant reminder of God's presence in the midst of the nomadic band of Israel.

What the tabernacle did for the people of God as they wandered in the wilderness, the temple did as they established themselves in the Promised Land. Once again the logistical and technical skill needed is mind boggling. The number of skilled laborers is overwhelming:

Solomon conscripted seventy thousand laborers and eighty thousand stonecutters in the hill country, with three thousand six hundred to oversee them. Solomon sent word to King Hiram of Tyre:... "So now send me an artisan skilled to work in gold, silver, bronze, and iron, and in purple, crimson, and blue fabrics, trained also in engraving, to join the skilled workers who are with me in Judah and Jerusalem, whom my father David provided. Send me also cedar, cypress, and algum timber from Lebanon, for I know that your servants are skilled in cutting Lebanon timber. My

servants will work with your servants to prepare timber for me in abundance, for the house I am about to build will be great and wonderful.” (2 Chron. 2:2, 7-9)

The glory of the temple was a reminder of God’s presence in the midst of Israel.

Like the tabernacle before it, the temple’s placement emphasized its importance: “Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David” (2 Chron. 3:1). Not only was Mount Moriah physically the most prominent point in Jerusalem, but it also was the most religiously significant. Even before the temple was built, Mount Moriah held a distinctive place in the history of Israel. Mount Moriah was the place Abraham went to sacrifice his only son Isaac and became known as the place, “The Lord will provide” (Gen. 22: 14). The technology and skill used to build the temple pointed the people to God and emphasized their reliance on God.

The comparison of the time it took to build the temple as compared to Solomon’s own house highlights the tug of war over the use of technology. The final verse of 1 Kings 6 tells the time Solomon needed to build the temple: “He was seven years in building it” (1 Kings 6: 38). The very next verse says, “Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished his entire house” (7:1). The juxtaposition cannot be ignored: seven years to build the temple and thirteen years to build his own house. The question of Solomon’s priorities is unavoidable. Solomon’s primary focus is not on expressing devotion to God; his greatest concern, by a nearly two-to-one ratio, is self-aggrandizement through the use of the technology by building a palace.

The tabernacle and temple are examples of using technology on a grand scale. On the opposite end of the spectrum of technological use are the micro-applications of

phylacteries and mezuzahs in the faith of Israel. Phylacteries are the small leather pouches that hung from the wrists and foreheads of the faithful. Mezuzahs are the niches on the doorframes of the Hebrew houses. Both are literal applications of the words of the Deuteronomy 6 to bind the words of the *shema* on the hand, forehead, and doorposts of the house. Phylacteries would be the equivalent of using mobile technology in faith formation. Mezuzahs could be compared to having a religious message as the screensaver on the family desktop computer.

Another form of technology that is prominent in Scripture is the use of scrolls. Jeremiah 36 is a prime example. Nineteen times in the thirty-two verses of this chapter, writing the word of the Lord on a scroll is mentioned. Jeremiah even has his own technology assistant or secretary in Baruch: “Then Jeremiah called Baruch son of Neriah, and Baruch wrote on a scroll at Jeremiah’s dictation all the words of the Lord that he had spoken to him” (Jer. 36:4). Then the scrolls became a means to share the word of the Lord to the people: “Jeremiah ordered Baruch, saying: ‘I am prevented from entering the house of the Lord; so you go yourself, and on a fast day in the hearing of the people in the Lord’s house you shall read the words of the Lord from the scroll that you have written at my dictation’” (Jer. 36: 5-6). The scroll became the means of taking the word of the Lord to places where Jeremiah himself was not able to be present.

The use of technology in the New Testament. In the New Testament, Jesus used scrolls in the synagogue of his hometown of Nazareth on the Sabbath day: “And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written...” (Luke 4:16-17). The apostles Paul, Peter, James, and John used scrolls and letters as people today use e-mails to communicate with the various churches

throughout the ancient world to shape their faith. Much of New Testament functions as reply-all e-mails with communications circulating from church to church. The most obvious examples of this process are in Revelation 2 and 3 where John addresses the seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

Not only the written messages themselves utilized the latest technology for communication, but the process of distributing the letters used the technological infrastructure of that time. The network of Roman roads was a technological triumph that contributed to the ability to carry faith-formation information quickly and efficiently, much as the World Wide Web functions as a highway of information today. The Mediterranean Sea, at the heart of the Roman Empire, was a major factor in distributing messages and spreading the Gospel. Acts chronicles the travels of Paul, demonstrating the use of logistical technology in the early Church.

In the Gospel accounts, Jesus and the disciples used available technology in innovative ways in the process of faith formation. When the crowds began to press in upon Jesus as he taught along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he used the fishing boats of the disciples as a makeshift pulpit (Matt. 13:2; Mark 4:1; Luke 5:3). When the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11) to Jesus he produced a visual presentation as he wrote in the dust. No one knows exactly what was pictured, but because of this pointed technological intervention the crowd was dispersed, and as Jesus told the woman, “Go and sin no more” her life was transformed.

None of these examples can compare with the use of technology that is at the very core of the Christian message, the cross of Christ. The Roman cross was the zenith

of the technology of death. It was public, painful, and punitive. The protracted process of execution was designed with a twofold purpose. The first was to punish the offender through an excruciating death. The second was to make a public display that would cause the populace to cower into submission to Roman rule. This technology was very efficient and effective in communicating a clear message: Transgressors of Roman authority beware.

God has a very different application for the cross. The Christian faith is transformed by and conforms to the cross of Christ. Jesus told his disciples on the way to Jerusalem about the centrality of the cross:

If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it. (Luke 9:23-23)

The cross is truly a transformational tool as believers die to themselves and rise to newness of life in Jesus Christ. Paul conveys an eternal truth when he writes, “For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18). Peter proclaims the power of the cross: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed” (1 Pet. 2:24). In the eternal plan of God, the technology of death becomes the way to new life.

Faith Formation in the Church

The family has served as the epicenter of faith formation throughout the history of the church. Seminal figures such as Chrysostom, Luther, and Wesley span the centuries, yet all recognize the vital role played by the family in passing on the faith from

generation to generation. Each era used the technology of its time in the context of the family to influence the faith of those who would follow.

John Chrysostom. A priest and bishop in Asia Minor during the fourth century, Chrysostom sees the family as a “sacred community” or a “little church” (*On Marriage and Family* 57). The relational aspects of the Trinity became his model for the family: “Parents who are worshippers of the triune God are called upon to emulate God the Father’s love for his Son, while children should love and obey their parents as the Son loves and obeys the Father through the Spirit” (Guroian 64). The transformational love of God takes on Trinitarian aspects as it flows freely among God, parents, and children.

Chrysostom advocates the *etching process* described previously in the discussion of the *shema*. He preaches that parents act as artists, sculpting their children with care, helping to restore the image of God in their offspring (Schoelles 55). In one of his sermons, Chrysostom says that parents are called beyond natural love to see their children as icons, divine statues of God (“Address on Vainglory” 96). The tools that Chrysostom places in the hands of parents for the process of formation of children are reading of Scripture, sharing in prayer, and acting as models of holy living. He urges parents not only to tell Bible stories to their children but also to have the children tell them the stories (Schoelles 56). The importance of the family in the faith-formation process for Chrysostom is not only in the instruction of faith traditions but the example of, and participation in, faithful living for every member of the family.

Martin Luther. Few individuals in history have used the technological advances of their day more effectively for theological purposes than Luther. The printing press was the engine of the Reformation and Luther was the dynamo of intellectual energy and

spiritual insight that provided the powerful and provocative ideas that turned the crank of the presses. Luther scholar Richard Marius says, “Luther wrote and talked with almost the regularity of breath, and anyone who sets out to know him well must climb a mountain of literary output” (6). The following points are some of the most crucial in relation to faith formation within the family.

The Small Catechism was a Christian primer for all believers. It provided the head of the household instruction in basic tenets of the faith so they could teach the family:

The Small Catechism, called an enchiridion, or handbook, by Luther could well be renamed “Handbook for the Christian Household.” To be certain, addressing the explanations to the heads of households, meant that the explanations were to be used by parents to explain the various texts of the lay Bible to their children. But as well, Luther included the basic “liturgy” of the household, prayers at meals, morning and evening, with instructions that these prayers be memorized. Those liturgical moments fit not the spiritual life of the monastic world, but the daily schedule of common household: rising, eating, and sleeping. (Wengert 379-96)

One of the aspects of Luther’s genius included combining the technological development of the printing press with timeless structure of the family. Luther has a very high view of the importance of parents in the faith-formation process and wanted to equip them for their primary responsibility through the Small Catechism.

Luther is very perceptive in the development of the Small Catechism. He makes use of the natural curiosity of children by using a simple question his son Hans asked him throughout the catechism: What does this mean? The question becomes a refrain to lead into his concise yet insightful explanations of the Apostle’s Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the sacraments.

Luther is also very innovative in his use of technology and application of theology in the Small Catechism. He uses woodcuts to illustrate his volume. His emphasis on the

importance of family life can be seen in the inclusion of brief liturgies for marriage and baptism. These two worship rites center on the forming of the family unit in matrimony and the expansion of family life through birth. Dr. Timothy J. Wengert shares his surprise and delight in these aspects, which he found in copies of the Small Catechism he has examined from the time of Luther:

First, much to my surprise there were woodcuts—not just one or two, as in other early evangelical catechisms—but one for each Commandment, each article of the Creed, each petition of the Lord’s Prayer, and each sacrament: twenty-two in all. Each depicted a Bible story, complete with reference, illustrating the point of the respective portion of the catechism. They also served as visual aids for illiterate members of the household... Second, almost all the printings of the Small Catechism, published during Luther’s lifetime, included two appendices: Luther’s German marriage and baptismal services with his prefaces. To be sure, in the first instance these services would have been included for the sake of the “ordinary pastors and preachers” addressed in the preface. However, those two services in fact defined the housechurch itself, created by God’s left hand through marriage and by God’s right hand through holy baptism. (391)

Luther sees the importance of the marriage of a man and woman, but also the marriage of technology and theology in the faith-formation process within everyday family life.

Luther recognizes the role of the family in the faith-formation process as being equal to that of ecclesiastical authorities:

Most certainly father and mother are apostles, bishops, and priests to their children, for it is they who make them acquainted with the gospel. In short, there is no greater or nobler authority on earth than that of parents over their children, for this authority is both spiritual and temporal. Whoever teaches the gospel to another is truly his apostle and bishop. (*Luther’s Works* 45: 46)

Luther looks to the biblical progenitors of Adam and Eve and the example of the patriarchs as pastors and parents within the family structure (6: 102; 8: 75; 12: 73) as the natural flow of developing the relationship with God before the infrastructure of the synagogue or church had developed.

In the Large Catechism (Tappert 357), written for parish priests to instruct their parishioners, Luther undergirds the importance of the family structure:

To fatherhood and motherhood God has given the special distinction, above all estates that are beneath it, that he commands us not simply to love our parents but also to honor them.... Thus he distinguishes father and mother above all other persons on earth, and places them next to himself. For it is a much greater thing to honor than to love. (qtd. in Lazareth 218)

Luther places the relationship with parents, and the respect and honor given them, second only to the believer's relationship with God. Luther scholar William Henry Lazareth does not overstate the primacy of the fourth commandment in Luther's understanding when he writes, "Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother" was regarded by Luther as the undisputed backbone of all civil authority and social welfare in the kingdom of men on earth" (219). Luther sees how the healthy respect expressed in the family impacted the health of the overall society.

Along with the respect parents deserve from their children, Luther addresses the other side of the parent-child relationship by clearly stating the responsibility of the parent to raise the child to honor God:

In addition, it would be well to preach to parents on the nature of their office how they should treat those committed to their authority.... Parents should consider that they owe obedience to God, and that, above all, they should earnestly and faithfully discharge the duties of their office, not only to provide for the material support of their children, servants, subjects, etc., but especially to bring them up to the praise and honor of God. Therefore do not imagine that the parental office is a matter of your pleasure and whim. It is a strict commandment and injunction of God, who holds you accountable to it. (Tappert 388)

For Luther the role of the parent in the faith-formation process was a holy endeavor, not to be taken lightly.

In essence, the spirituality of the family Luther describes is Trinitarian in nature, flowing from God to parents and then between parents and children and back up to God. Luther uses a relational explanation to introduce the Lord's Prayer in 1531 when his oldest child was five years old. Luther expounded on the words, "Our Father who art in heaven:"

With these words God wants to attract us, so that we believe he is truly our Father and we are truly his children, in order that we may ask him boldly and with complete confidence, just as loving children ask their loving father. (qtd. in Wengert 26)

Luther sees family life as not only an example of the relationship between God and humanity but an expression of it.

Luther also understands that relationship to involve the extended family. Examples of the inclusion of grandparents, aunts, and uncles surface in some of Luther's letters:

Dear Father:
My brother James has written me that you are seriously ill. I should have come to you personally with the greatest willingness, but my good friends advised me against it and have persuaded me not to, and I myself thought it better not to tempt God by putting myself in peril, for you know how the lords and peasants feel toward me. It would be the greatest joy if it were possible for you and mother to come hither, which my Katie and all of us beg with tears that you will do. I hope we are able to take good care of you. Therefore I am sending Cyriac to see whether your weakness will allow you to be moved. However in God's wisdom your illness turns out whether you live or die, it would be a heartfelt joy to me to be with you again and with filial piety and service to show my gratitude to God and to you according to the Fourth Commandment. (Luther, *Luther: Letters* 30)

Much has been made through the years of Luther's estrangement from his father when he entered the monastery in 1505. As Luther's life unfolded, he and his father reconciled with each other. Both of Luther's parents were present at his marriage to Catherine von Bora in 1525. The letter reveals a devoted son who invites his ailing father to come and

live at Luther Hall. Like many families today, the Luthers had to deal with the reality of a long-distance relationship.

Another important member of the Luthers' extended household was Katie's aunt, Magdalene von Bora. She had been a nun at the convent of Nimbschen along with Katie. When Katie and Martin married, Aunt Lena came to live with them. She proved to be a very helpful and beloved part of the family as she cared for the children of the growing Luther clan. The following account was recorded at the time of her death by Anthony Lauterback in 1537:

When Dr. Martin Luther approached a certain honorable matron who was lying on her deathbed, he consoled her in this fashion: "Aunt Lena, do you recognize me and can you hear me?" When she signified that she could understand him, he said, "Your faith rests alone on the Lord Jesus Christ." Afterward he said: "He is the resurrection and the life. You shall lack nothing. You will not die but will fall asleep like an infant in a cradle, and when morning dawns, you will rise again and live forever." "Yes, indeed," she replied. Then he asked, "Is anything troubling you?" "Nothing," she replied. "Do you have pain in the region of your heart? The Lord will deliver you from all pain. You will not die." Turning to us, he said, "It is well with her, for this is not death, but sleep." He went to the window to pray by himself, and at twelve o'clock he left her. At seven o'clock she fell asleep. (45)

The priority of faith was an integral part of life in the Luther household, so faith formation was a continuing process all through life and even unto death.

Raikes, Wesley, and Bushnell. The advent of the Industrial Revolution in the 1700s greatly impacted society. Technology transformed the scale and scope of production of material goods. It also affected the family and faith-formation process as parents began to work away from home and many children were also entering the workforce (May and Stonehouse 101). This letter written by Robert Raikes in 1783 captures the challenges of the day:

I was walking into the suburbs of the city, where the lowest of the people (who were principally employed in the pin factory) chiefly reside. I was struck with concern at seeing a group of children wretchedly ragged, at play in the street. I asked an inhabitant whether those children belonged to that part of town, and lamented their misery and idleness. "Ah! Sir," said the woman to whom I was speaking, "could you take a view of this part of town on Sunday, you would be shocked and indeed; for then the street is filled with multitudes of these wretches who, released on that day from their employment, spend their time in noise and riot and play at chuck and cursing and swearing in a manner so horrid, as to convey to any serious mind an idea of hell." (qtd. in Anthony and Benson 262)

From Raikes' encounter came the idea of Sunday school. The Sunday school was always intended to have two purposes: first, to instruct the children in basic educational aims of reading, writing, morals, and manners; and, second, to evangelize those who were in desperate need for new life within (263). The Industrial Revolution not only shifted the production of goods away from small, family-based enterprises, but it also shifted the faith-formation process away from the home and into an institutional endeavor.

Wesley was pragmatic in his approach to faith formation. Because he never had children of his own, he drew on his experience in the home of his origin. Susanna Wesley, John's mother influenced him tremendously. She placed a high value on the systematic teaching of her sons and daughters, spending personal time with each one every week. She also organized classes in her home for her children and servants, and other members of the community were welcomed to these "kitchen meetings" (May and Stonchouse 103). These gatherings were no small task since she had ten children that survived infancy. Wesley solicited from Susanna a description of her techniques and rules in child rearing, which he published in his journal at her death (Bunge 282). Her methods reflected a spectrum of approaches from correction by the rod, to the breaking of the will, to not giving in to a child's desires to stop him or her from crying.

Wesley also observed what worked in the world around him. In a sermon on educating children, he addresses those who taught:

And if they give children too much of their own will, or needlessly and churlishly restrain them; if they either use no punishment at all, or more than is necessary, the leaning either to one extreme or the other may frustrate their endeavors. (13: 474)

The use-what-works approach to discipline had one objective—the sanctification of the child.

Wesley always had a single-mindedness of purpose. The goal of all work with children at home, in the schools, in the Methodist society was to make them pious, to lead to personal religion, and to ensure salvation (Prince 87). Wesley exhorted preachers to spend time with children and directed them to formalize a group if at least ten children were in regular attendance (May and Stonchouse 103). This pragmatic approach proved itself effective. Small groups, bands, or cells were some of the principal components that Wesley contributed to the faith-formational experience (Maddix 81). With the breakdown of the family structure as the primary source of spiritual development during the Industrial Revolution, Wesley used the bands as a surrogate system of support for religious nurture.

Like Luther and Raikes, Wesley addressed the need for faith formation in his time:

His “Thought on the Manner of Educating Children” (1783) stresses the importance of discipline and the significance of true religion to a good education. His sermon “On the Education of Children” (1783) is an extended comment on parental responsibilities for education in the family, reminiscent of his mother’s letter on educational methods in the Epworth rectory. (Bunge 286)

The fact that he was a man of boundless energy and singleness of purpose can be seen in his prodigious writings. Wesley wrote and published materials specifically for use in the educational process, including five grammars, a four-volume *Concise History of England*, a fifty-volume *Christian Library*, and a *Compendium of Logic* (287). While Wesley saw the family as a place of primary importance for faith development, he also attended to the needs of those whose families had not functioned adequately in that role. He provided methodical resources for individuals to come to a saving knowledge of Christ and a renewed life.

Bushnell helped push the pendulum of formational practice back toward the family as the locus of learning. His text published in 1847 challenged the notion that children exist outside of God's grace until their spiritual capacity has reached maturity (May and Stonehouse 105). His primary premise was cultivation of the Christian faith was a lifelong process within the family. Bushnell writes, "The child is to grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise" (4). This insight was a seismic shift in the thinking of his time and sent shock waves through the church.

While controversial, over time Bushnell's understanding of faith formation has become a cornerstone of many present-day educational and formational practices:

The now commonplace awareness that the home environment and family relationships may be instrumental in conversion—canonized in church nursery schools, religious education programs, and parachurch family organizations for much of the twentieth century—owes much to Bushnell's assertion that the seeds of faith exist in the heart even of a newborn child. ... By the early twentieth century, the Victorian stress on gender roles and hierarchy had given way to a far more "Bushnellian" ideal that emphasized companionship, and emotional intimacy between parents and children. (Bunge 356)

Like most theorists, Bushnell reacted or overreacted to the negative consequences of the prevailing constructs of his age. His insights contributed significantly to the continuing conversation about spiritual development and the role of family in the process.

Billy Graham and James Dobson. Graham is a seminal figure in twentieth-century Christianity. Even though Graham has five children, nineteen grandchildren, and a growing number of great grandchildren, he has not used his considerable influence or life experience to address the issues of family life. He has, however, been a pioneer and authoritative figure in the areas of spiritual formation and the use of media.

Since the 1940s, Graham has preached the gospel to over 215 million individuals who have personally attended his rallies and crusades. Countless millions have been touched through his pioneering use of radio, television, films, the Internet, and innovative organizational techniques:

Until [the 20th] century the extent of an evangelist's outreach was determined by the limits of his voice and the distribution of his writings. Within the last few years, it has literally become possible to proclaim the Gospel to the entire world. If Jesus were here today, I have no doubt He would make use of every means possible to declare His message. ("Billy Graham")

Graham used technological developments in ministry long before the Internet was possible or popular.

The Billy Graham Evangelical Association Web site has tabs for videos, TV specials, radio, audio, audio archives, and *Decision Magazine*. The Billy Graham Evangelical Association application is compatible to the numerous emerging technological platforms. It also includes daily devotions, a Scripture-reading program, faith-sharing helps, an archive of available past popular events, as well as the current radio sermons and crusades ("Multimedia"). While the gospel message of hope in Christ

has remained consistent through the years, the changing world of technology has helped to changed innumerable lives through Graham's ministry.

The next generation in the use of technology in ministry is evangelical leader Dobson, the founder of *Focus on the Family*. Billy Graham combined evangelization and technology, while Dobson wove together the three cords of faith formation, technology, and family connection. The *Focus on the Family* Web site reveals the tag line of "Helping Families Thrive" and tab titles of marriage, parenting, life challenges and faith. Choosing the life challenges tab leads to life transitions under which falls the category of grandparenting (Dobson).

Some of the articles appearing in the sidebar on the grandparenting page deal with the issue of overcoming the physical distance between grandparents and grandchildren. Their titles include "Fun Online Communication with Grandkids," "Grandparenting across the Miles," and "Long Distance Grandparenting" (Knudson). These articles are helpful in building and maintaining a viable and vibrant relationship between grandparents and grandchildren, but still do not address the topic of grandparents as agents in the faith-formation process. The void reveals the timeliness and value of this present study.

A Grand Opening in the Formation Process

The family is a primary building block in the formation of individual character, personal faith, family ideals, and society's values: "It is virtually impossible to overestimate the importance of the family to a child's total development. The basic formation of character and development of personality that occurs within the home covers all the bases: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual" (Thompson 20). The

integrity of a physical structure depends on the stability of its foundation. The broader the base, the more weight the wall can bear.

The same is true in the family structure. It is “the first and most basic association of civil society” (Commission on Children 40). Considering the vital place of the family underscores why the role of grandparents is an important part of the formation process. The positive role of grandparents can help broaden the base and add to the stability of the individuals within the family structure that rest upon the generational foundation.

Grandparents and the Ground of Being

Using another building analogy, Douglas J. Schoelles says “God hardwired human beings to connect in families” (73). The bonding process is one of the miracles of life that has been recognized since the beginning of humanity but has only been scientifically examined in recent decades. Along with the anecdotal acknowledgement and personal experience, empirical evidence is mounting that “nurturing environments, or the lack of them, affect gene transcription and the development of brain circuitry” (Commission on Children 17). Researchers are just beginning to grasp the importance of bonding and the biochemistry that takes place in the release of neuropeptides, oxytocin, vasopressin, dopamine, prolactin, and endogenous opioid peptides during the bonding process.

The importance of touch, security, and an unconditional positive regard are lifted up by the Commission of Children (17). The vast majority of this research deals with the connection between mothers and children, but the connection with fathers is also vital. These nurturing relationships literally go to the core of who individuals are and who they will become: “Our deep need for attachment and connectedness to others can be traced

back to the brain's deepest centers of reward and gratification" (18). Watching a grandparent hold a newborn grandchild leads to a logical inference, that since the circuitry of the brain is impacted by the bonding of vital relationships through nurturing, that grandparents could be the ground wire that keeps young people from emotional, spiritual, and relational short circuiting.

The recognition of grandparents as agents of bonding is good news since the phenomenon of grandparenting is becoming more common as the average life-span increases:

In the last two decades, many Western countries are witnessing lower rates of fertility and higher life expectancy. The number of individuals therefore who will live part of their lives as members of three- and four-generation families is increasing, as is the proportion of grandparents. As a consequence, grandparenthood is achieving a growing prominence. (Attar-Schwartz et al. 67-75)

For many families grandparents have become a vital part of the support system in the process of child rearing.

Grandparents as Natural Mentors

The findings on bonding, combined with the understanding of the importance of mentors in the development of young people, leads one to a logical connection of grandparents serving as mentors. The idea of an older individual helping to shape a younger person goes all the way back to Homer's *Odyssey* (20). Odysseus, as he prepared to head out on his odyssey, placed his son, Telemachos, under the care of his faithful friend, Mentor. The association would come to define mentoring as the practice of an older person guiding and counseling a younger individual to maturity.

In recent years mentoring has become increasingly more popular and has displayed some very positive outcomes. Research shows mentoring has the potential to

reduce violence significantly and other negative risk-taking behaviors in adolescents (Higginbotham, Harris, Marshall, and Lee 5). Other benefits include increases in positive self-concept (DuBois and Silverthorn 520) and increases in educational attainment and fewer days skipping school (521; Grossman and Tierney 22; Thompson and Kelly-Vance 231). These findings suggest that mentoring can, and does, have positive implications for youth.

The term *natural mentors* has been given to mentors, such as grandparents, whose relationship occurs outside of formal mentoring programs. According to some researchers, evidence indicates that natural mentors are more effective at shaping adolescent behaviors than are volunteers in the structured and formal mentoring capacities (DuBois and Silverthorn 522). Grandparents are the most natural of all mentors.

The relationship between grandparents and grandchildren has some built-in advantages for mentoring. In addition to the natural bond between grandparents and grandchildren, grandparents bring other intrinsic advantages to the mentoring process. These include their presence within a young person's already existing social network or, using ecological systems theory, within their microsystem (Goodrich 27). Grandparents provide important supportive roles in contexts of family, church, school, and athletics. Their closeness may increase the value they bring as sources of support and encouragement. Research reveals that natural mentoring relationships promote favorable health and developmental outcomes (DuBois and Silverthorn 522). Findings suggest that natural mentors place increased emphasis on shaping behavior (Zimmerman and Hurd 45). This tendency is particularly true in families where one of the parents is missing.

Studies show that a relationship with biological grandparents is one of the more stable and influential relationships in a young person's uncertain world of adult relationships in families in which one of the biological parents is absent (Ruiz and Silverstein 800). Changes within family structures have emphasized the need of supportive adults in the lives of young people.

Even though mentoring programs can be and are an important factor in the equation of risk management in the process of child rearing, the influence of caring natural mentors has greater impact. Research indicates that mentoring programs with a non-natural mentoring relationship do not appear to influence behavior to the same degree as those with a natural relationship (Zimmerman and Hurd 42). Grandparents fit the profile of natural mentors and can be a valuable asset in the matrix of the modern family.

Converging Demographics

Demographics reveal a number of converging trends that open up the opportunity for impactful relationships between grandparents and grandchildren. The first trend is the increased life expectancy of individuals (Shrestha and Heisler 13). The second is the decreased fertility rates (31). The third is that more and more children are being raised in one-parent families (Attar-Schwartz et al. 67-75). These three demographic trends converge and give grandparents a meaningful opportunity to have a positive influence in the lives of their grandchildren.

The first factor of longer life expectancy means the longer people live the more likely they will become grandparents. The corollary to this trend is that children will have a greater chance of living in a family that extends to three and four generations (Ruiz and

Silverstein). The additional factor of fewer grandchildren per grandparent creates to possibility of grandparents spending more time with each grandchild. The total number of grandchildren for each grandparent limits how involved they can be in each grandchild's life (Elder and Conger). What these trends indicate is that grandparents can concentrate their time, affection, and attention on fewer grandchildren for a longer period of time.

The idea of grandparents with fewer grandchildren having greater time to spend with their grandchildren, thereby resulting in greater influence on their grandchildren, is the dominate opinion (Mueller and Elder 404-17). Some findings suggest otherwise. A 2010 study at Iowa State University found that the greater number of grandchildren per grandmother, the closer the shared values were in the area of moral beliefs (Bentrott 37). The number of grandchildren per grandparent is not the only indicator of formative influence in the grandparent-grandchild relationship.

The third trend is the diverse makeup of the modern family. Fewer children are living in traditional family structures made up of two parents:

The percentage of children who grow up in fragile—typically fatherless—families has grown enormously over the past five decades. This is mainly due to increases in divorce, nonmarital childbearing, and unmarried cohabitation. The trend toward fragile families leveled off in the late 1990s, but the most recent data show a slight increase. There is now ample evidence that stable and satisfactory marriages are crucial for the well-being of adults. Yet such marriages are even more important for the proper socialization and overall well-being of children. (Wilcox 93)

The steady increase in fragile families is troubling in itself, but the mounting body of evidence of the long-term negative effect on children is truly disturbing.

The *State of Our Unions: Marriage in America 2010* produced by the University of Virginia's National Marriage Project is a fifteen-year comprehensive study. It traces marital and family trends over a fifty-year period and reports the results:

The trend toward single-parent families is probably the most important of the recent family trends that have affected children and adolescents. This is because the children in such families have negative life outcomes—including abuse, depression, school failure, and delinquency—at two to three times the rate of children in married, two-parent families. (Wilcox 93)

With the overwhelming evidence of the erosion of the family structure and its negative impact on children, solid ground must be found on which to build the lives of the next generation. The possibility of grandparents serving as part of the foundation of a child's world is encouraging. Involved grandparents could add stability for children living in an uncertain world whether their families are fragile or stable.

Factors Influencing Grandparent-Grandchild Relationship

While supportive grandparents can be an important piece of the family structure, the grandparent-grandchild relationship is complex and multifaceted. Some of the variables that affect the relationship are age, income, time availability, education, relational dynamics, and personal priorities (Mueller and Elder 404-17). All grandparents do not have the same opportunity, commitment, style, or goals in their relationships with their grandchildren.

The style of grandparenting is an essential aspect of the grandparent-grandchild relationship. Margaret M. Mueller and Glen H. Elder, Jr. sampled 879 grandparents and grouped their approaches to grandparenting into five categories: (1) influential—fully involved and highly significant; (2) supportive—close interactive relationships but without any type of parent-like authority; (3) authority oriented source of discipline; (4) passive—moderately involved; and, (5) detached—distant (404-17). These categories are helpful in conceptualizing some of the primary approaches to grandparenting.

Proximity between grandparents and grandchildren matters. Grandparents who live more than ten miles away from grandchildren have far less involvement than grandparents living closer: “Even short distance limits the amount of involvement a grandparent has with a grandchild” (Mueller and Elder). While physical distance is an important factor in the grandparent-grandchild relationship, it can be mitigated by another factor, the use of technology. For grandparents with the priority and commitment for meaningful interaction with their grandchildren, technology has the potential and promise to help bridge the gap of physical separation.

The Technology Bridge

The classic song, “Over the River and through the Wood” by Lydia Child describes how distance is overcome between generations. A modern adaptation of those words might be, “Over the Internet and through the Cloud to grandmother’s house we go, technology is the way we text and we play, while we watch our relationship grow.” The possibilities for technology being a conduit for relationships, spanning the barriers of miles and time zones between grandparents and grandchildren, are almost limitless.

Grandparents and Technology

Factors contributing to the building of the technology bridge are revealed in emerging demographics and continuing technological development. Consistent findings show, increasingly, grandparents are younger with fewer grandchildren (Shrestha and Heisler 1). The younger age at which individuals become grandparents allows them more time to be grandparents. At the present time, 43 percent of grandparents became grandparents in their 50s and 37 percent in their 40s, with the average age of grandparents in the United States being 48. By 2015 baby boomers will make up nearly

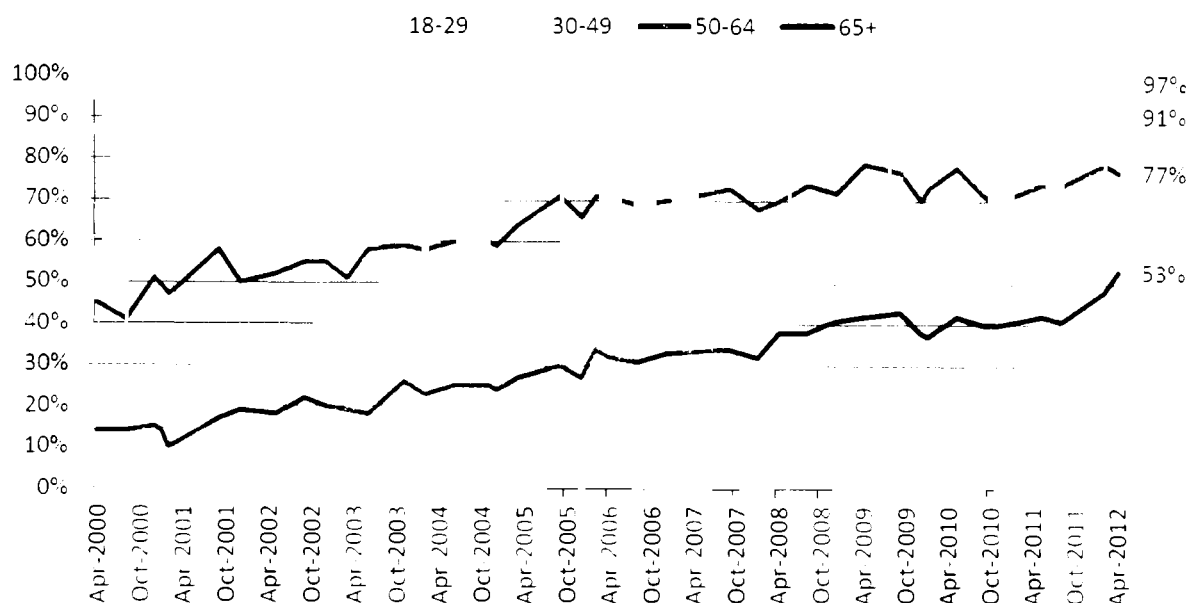
60 percent of all grandparents (“Surprising Facts”). This trend combined with the rising use of technology in these age groups and the potential of using technology as a conduit for intergenerational connection has great potential.

Baby boomers grew up with emerging technology and, at the same time, remember the days before computers. They have seen the implications and applications of technology in work and are open to adapting those same advancements to personal use (Rogers 3). Most individuals of the burgeoning boomer generation of grandparents do not fit the technophobic stereotype. They are open to learning new technologies and, in addition, are willing to share what they learn with others (5). The building of a technological bridge between grandparents and grandchildren has a well-established footing on the side of the grandparents in the boomer generation.

A survey conducted by *Grandparents.com* strongly supports this assertion. When grandparents were asked about their involvement with techno-media, the following results show a high level of cyber-savvy. The survey shows 75 percent of grandparents were online; 70 percent use search engines to find information; 63 percent shop online; 56 percent share photos online; 46 percent bank online; 45 percent use social networks; and 30 percent prefer instant message (“Surprising Facts”). The survey clearly demonstrates the openness of grandparents to use technology.

The Pew Research Center backs up these findings through the extensive research conducted in the Pew Internet and American Life Project (PIP). The PIP has been tracking the trends in Internet usage since 2000. Their findings are very encouraging for utilizing the Internet as a conduit of communication between the generations. Figure 2.1.

demonstrates the increase in Internet usage across the board for all age groups. The steepest increase is in the oldest category, 65 and over (Zickuhr and Madden 4).



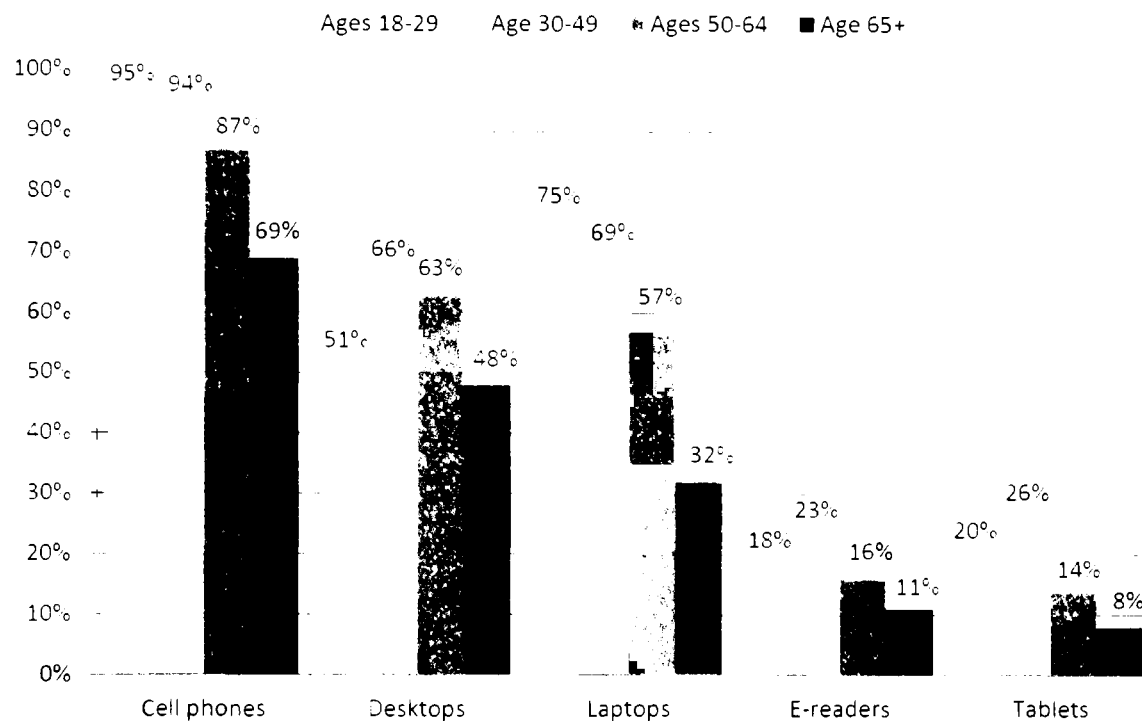
Source: Zickuhr and Madden 4.

Figure 2.1. Internet use by age group, 2000-12.

Another encouraging trend is that once seniors go online they become consistent users of technology. Of the 65+ group who use the Internet, 70 percent go online on a daily basis: “Once they (seniors) are given the tools and training needed to start using the Internet, they become fervent users of the technology” (Zickuhr and Madden 5). The possibility of a viable grandparent/grandchild technological connection increases as grandparents are younger and more familiar with technology.

Consistently, studies on use of technology indicate that the younger individuals are the earlier they adapt to new developments in technology. Figure 2.2 indicates the disparity among different age groups’ use of various technologies (Zickuhr and Madden

7). The lag time between younger earlier adapters to technology and older later adapters is a gap that is consistent, spanning various technologies.



Source: Zickuhr and Madden 7.

Figure 2.2. Gadget ownership by age group.

The study about the ownership of smartphones in the summer of 2012 by PIP revealed similar tendencies (Rainie). Once again the younger age categories displayed the higher percent of ownership of the latest technology— smartphones (see Table 2.1). While a disparity in technological adoption by age group exists, a generational technology connection is still possible. The majority of grandparents will not likely be on the cutting edge of technological developments, so the selection of specific technologies is important when making a virtual connection.

Table 2.1. Smartphone OwnershipSource: Rainie 2.

All adults (n=3,014)	45%
Men (n=1,337)	46
Women (n=1,677)	45
Age	
18-29 (n= 478)	66
30-49 (n=833)	59
50-64 (n=814)	34
65+ (n=830)	11

The openness of grandparents to use specific technologies when combined with the high priority grandchildren hold in their lives provides a golden opportunity to bring these two factors together in positive models of grandparenting. Remarkably, 72 percent of the grandparents surveyed thought being a grandparent was the single most important and satisfying thing in their life (“Surprising Facts”). These findings, when piggybacked onto the findings from a 2012 AARP, Inc. survey on grandparenting, give great hope for the use of technology to influence the moral development of the younger generation:

More than 80 percent of grandparents report speaking to their grandchildren on the phone at least once a month and more than a third communicate through new technologies such as e-mail, Skype, and text messaging. Fifty percent or more report their conversation topics include morals and values; religion and spirituality; peer pressure or bullying; illegal drugs; and drinking and alcohol use. Thirty-seven percent report discussing dating or sex with at least one of their grandchildren. (“New AARP Survey”)

These results, taken together with an earlier AARP study on grandparenting that found 78 percent talked with their grandchildren about morals and values (Davies and Williams), are very encouraging. AARP Inc. is a nonprofit organization formerly named American Association of Retired Persons.

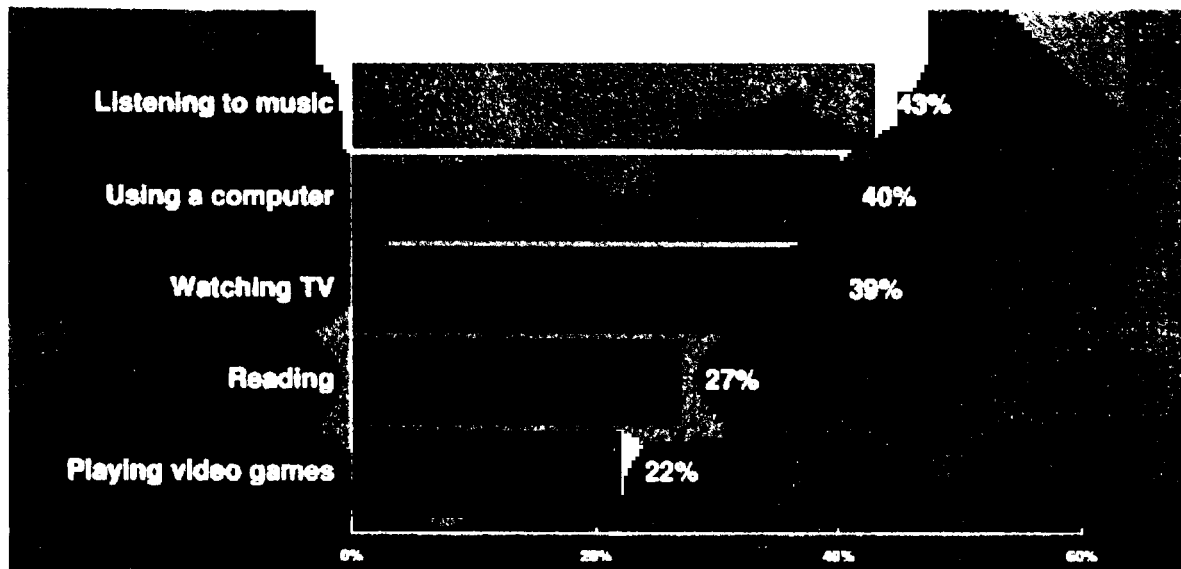
Grandchildren and Technology

The importance of building a technology bridge is highlighted by a growing gap not only in the way the differing generations think about and use technology, but by the differing way the generations think. Studies indicate dramatic changes in the thought processes of children growing up in a multitasking technological environment:

Researchers say the lure of these technologies, while it affects adults too, is particularly powerful for young people. The risk, they say, is that developing brains can become more easily habituated than adult brains to constantly switching tasks—and less able to sustain attention. “Their brains are rewarded not for staying on task but for jumping to the next thing,” said Michael Rich, an associate professor at Harvard Medical School and executive director of the Center on Media and Child Health in Boston. And the effects could linger: “The worry is we’re raising a generation of kids in front of screens whose brains are going to be wired differently.” (Richtel)

The very nature of assimilation of information is changing because of technology.

The standard for learning in earlier generations was the ability to concentrate or focus on a task for extended periods of time. The emerging standard is the ability to perform multiple tasks simultaneously, or multitasking (Kaiser 5; see Figure 2.3). This new reality in learning is influenced by the exposure time of young people to various forms of media and technology.



Source: Kaiser 4.

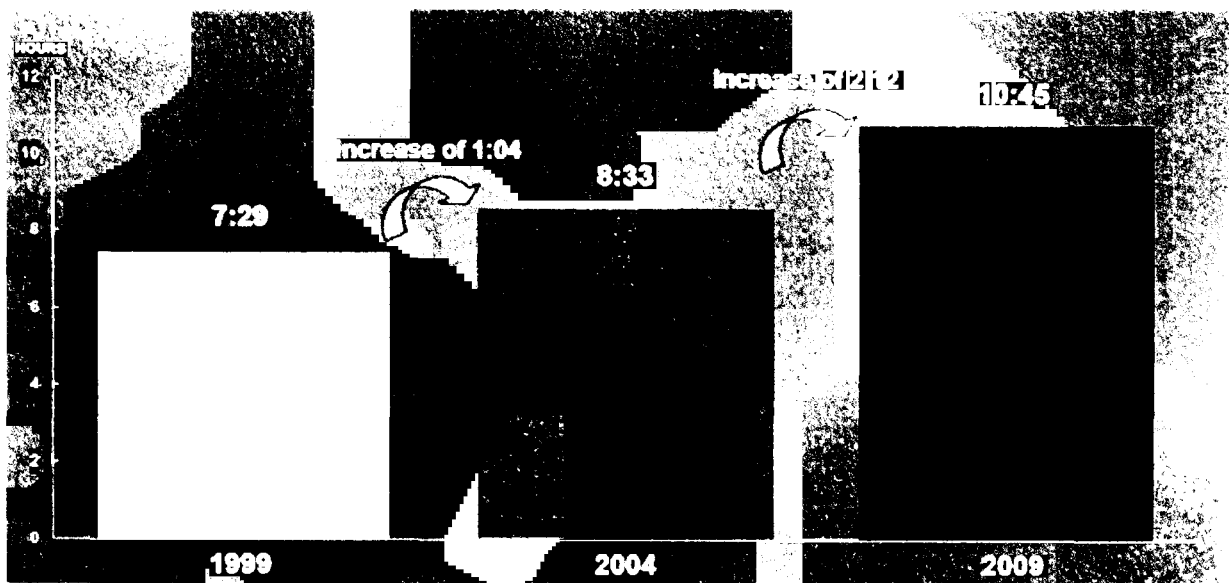
Figure 2.3. Multitask *most of the time* while using each medium, 7th-12th graders.

The challenge for all educational endeavors is to adapt to the multitasking phenomenon because it greatly influences the effectiveness of various teaching methods:

But even as some parents and educators express unease about students' digital diets, they are intensifying efforts to use technology in the classroom, seeing it as a way to connect with students and give them essential skills. Across the country, schools are equipping themselves with computers, Internet access and mobile devices so they can teach on the students' technological territory. (Richtel)

The technological territory as measured by time spent with media continues to grow.

As technology became more accessible in homes, children's use would obviously grow. The Kaiser Family Foundation reports the actual growth. The increase of over three hours of average exposure time in a day is a dramatic increase in the span of ten years from 1999 to 2009 (see Figure 2.4).



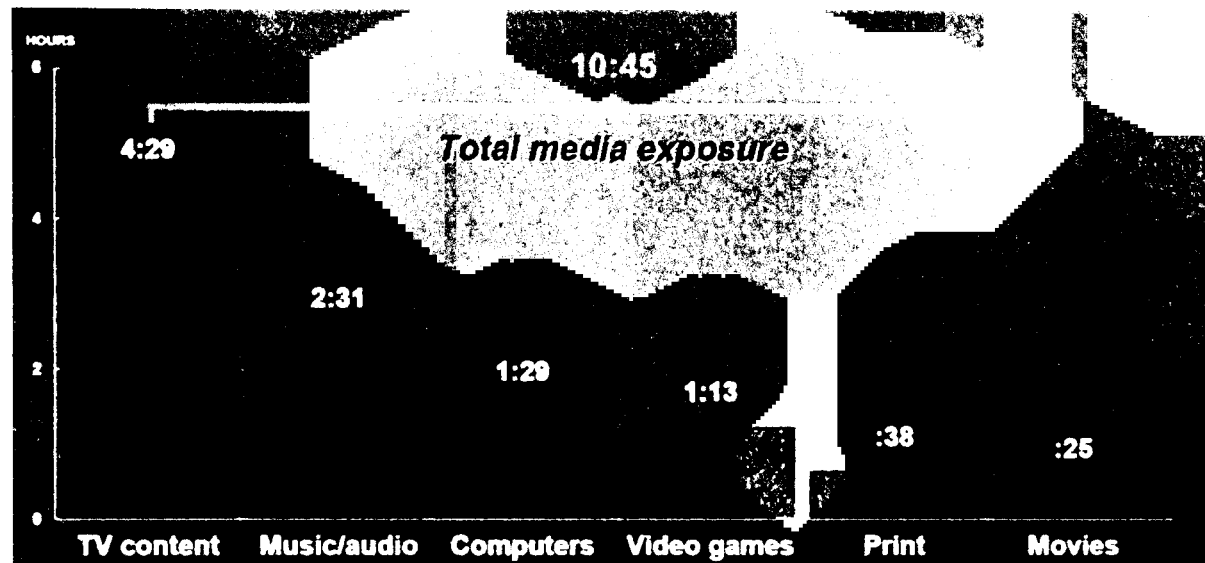
Source: Kaiser 2.

Figure 2.4. Amount of media exposure per day, 8-18-year-olds.

The flow of information and the way it is processed is fluid. The volume of information has become a flood among the various forms of technology. The development of the digital age can be compared to the transportation revolution that took place in the last century. Moving from horse and buggy to trains to automobiles then to airplanes increased access, shrank distances, and reduced the time of travel. The same is true to an exponentially greater scale with the technological revolution. Print media has become the horse and buggy of the information age. One of the pronounced impacts of digitization is that it equates to having the informational superhighway running into your living room.

This exposure is even more pronounced when broken down into categories of the types of media and the amount of time spent with each on a daily basis. The most striking reality is that for 8-18-year-olds only thirty-eight minutes of almost eleven hours of

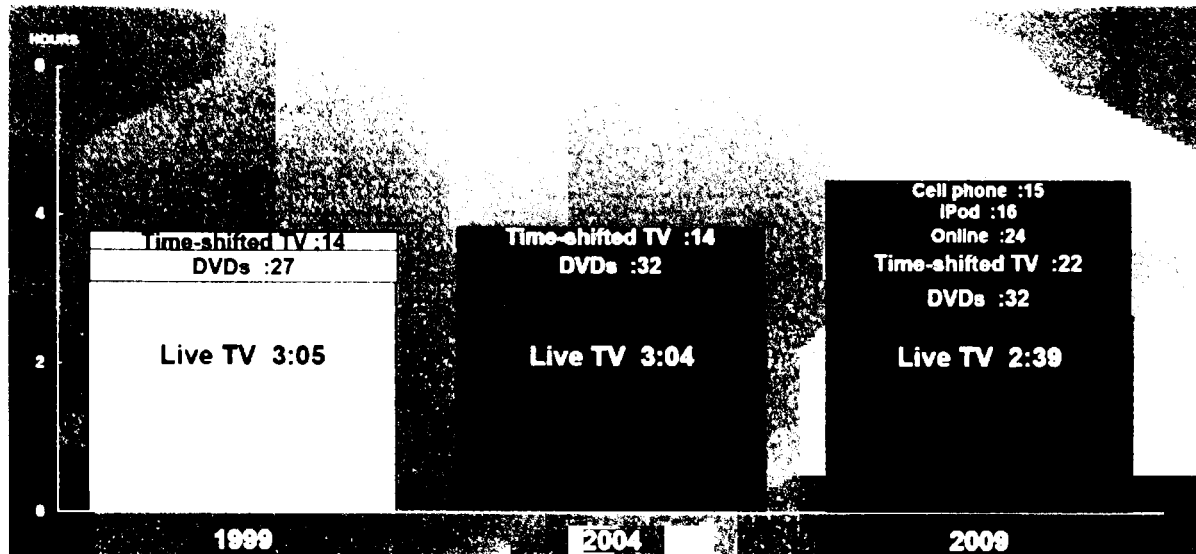
media exposure time in an average day is spent with print media (Kaiser 5; see Figure 2.5). The division of media exposure is an ongoing seismic shift.



Source: Kaiser 1.

Figure 2.5. Time spent with each medium per day, 8-18-year-olds.

While television has long been and continues to be the primary media influence in the lives of young people, the way television is being used is also undergoing a major transformation. The integration of television into the continuing technological revolution makes it a platform for interactive activities rather than just passive exposure. The amount of live television being watched is decreasing; the overall use is increasing and diversifying (Kaiser 12; see Figure 2.6).



Source: Kaiser 8.

Figure 2.6. Amount of time spent with TV, 8-18-year-olds.

Technology is not a curse or cure-all; it is a tool. The technology bridge between grandparents and grandchildren has many potential applications for the process of faith formation. Effective use of technology for spiritual development depends upon the clarity of purpose, intentionality in its application, support in its utilization, and supervision for the young users. All the components of a technological future in faith formation are available to the present generation of grandparents and grandchildren. The future is now for grandparents to be faith mentors for their grandchildren through the use of technology.

The Forming of a *Living Faith*

The goal of faith formation as a dynamic process is captured in a single concept in 2 Timothy 1:5, *a living faith*. The results of Paul's teaching, Eunice's nurturing, and Lois' mentoring produced in Timothy a living faith, expressed in a spirit of power, love, and

self-discipline. Those outcomes are the goal of spiritual development. Grandparents are an underutilized resource in the process of passing along the Christian faith.

Modeling as a Means of Formation

Children learn from what they see and experience. The process is called modeling. It is a powerful means of shaping the malleable lives of children:

Various studies and researches have tried to estimate the importance of learning through modeling, producing a vast array of results, but it seems likely that somewhere around 60 percent of the learning that affects people's behavior is based upon watching someone they know and trust doing something significant. (Barna, *Revolutionary Parenting* 92)

Parents are the most significant force in the shaping of a child, but grandparents can be an important source of support, both to the parents and the grandchildren. The family sets the example for honesty, trust, loyalty, cooperation, self-control, courtesy, compassion, personal responsibility, and respect for others (Commission on Children 40). The attitudes and the milieu of the family are the soil in which the seeds of a child's prevailing outlook on life grow. If having a positive example to follow in parents is a good thing in passing on values to children, having multiple role models through grandparents adds to the richness, depth, and fertility of that soil.

The modeling phenomenon is present in all areas of learning but is of particular significance in the area of faith formation. The accounts of the calling of the disciples in the gospels are very simple and straightforward invitations to model the life of Jesus. As recorded in Matthew 4:19, Jesus said to Peter and Andrew, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." In Mark 2:14 the invitation was extended to Levi as he sat in his tax office: "Follow me." In John 1:39, Jesus responded to Andrew's inquiry by saying, "Come and see." Each of these encounters contains within the invitation the implicit idea

that following and seeing Jesus is the act of becoming like Jesus. John explains in the prologue to his gospel the purpose of Christ's coming to earth: "The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). The Incarnation, in a very raw and simple form, is God modeling the meaning of being fully human and living as the image of God.

One of the challenges of the Christian faith has always been and will always be how to transform the kingdom of God from an ethereal notion into a concrete concept that can be grasped. This challenge is especially difficult, yet exquisitely easy, in conveying faith to children. The answer is incarnational living, the act of dying to oneself and rising to new life through the power of the Holy Spirit and in the image of Jesus:

Who we are as adults, what we believe about God, and how we think and feel permeate the world in which our children live and grow. We cannot shield them from that. In relationship with us they discover themselves and construct their God, whose valuing of them looks like the sense of worth they see reflected from us. (Stonehouse, *Joining Children* 130)

Catherine Stonehouse is describing modeling.

One of the clearest and most powerful examples of modeling in Scripture occurred in the upper room at the Last Supper when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. Jesus used the event as an illustration of selfless service. It culminated in an admonition by Jesus in John 13:14-15: "So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you." Peter, who was in the upper room with Jesus and learned from the example set by the Lord, implored other believers, "For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our

Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Pet. 1:16). Peter strove to follow the personal example he saw in Jesus.

Peter was not the only apostle that used modeling: Paul, writing to his young protégé, Timothy, set a standard of faith and practice that could be seen in his own life:

For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him. Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us. (1 Tim. 1:11-14)

The practice of modeling faith puts believers in the company of Jesus, Peter, and Paul.

Modeling allows grandparents to impact the next generation of believers by reflecting their priorities in the way they live:

Passing on the passion to our children is an opportunity to pass on our delight in the Father and in our Savior. Not merely training our children or instilling godly character,... but living before them a delighted contentedness in the goodness of our God. (Albertson 10)

The old adage is undeniable: “Children are sponges.” Living the Christian faith at home is the best way of sharing faith with young family members because children experience God through the important people in their lives. “Most children seem to assume that God is like their parents and other significant adults,...Through our relationships with very young children we participate in their spiritual development” (May and Stonehouse 152-53). A vital component of faith formation in children relies on their ability to see God’s love in the flesh of family members.

Parents and grandparents, as contributing adults in the lives of impressionable children, are the primary models followed. The family is a launching pad for children. It provides solid examples for the child to follow and the adolescent to push against as is

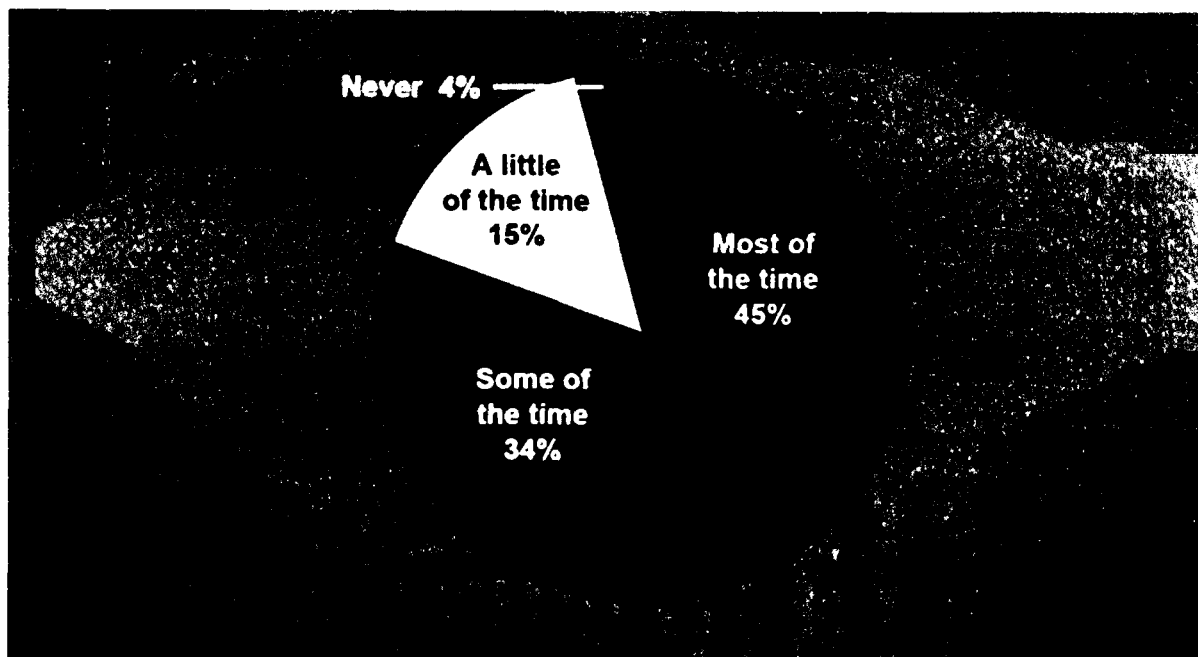
provided so healthy balance of guidance and the encroachment of a worldly culture: “In contradiction to our society, which encourages people to be either pathologically codependent or insanely independent, as parents we want to create in our children the sense of being interdependent and communal beings who are fully dependent upon God” (Westerhoff, *Will Our Children* 130). This objective happens when their dependence upon God is displayed in an integrated and cohesive way through their daily lives. “Parents model the values they hold through their use of time, their conversations, and the commitments they make” (Strommen and Hardel 89). Modeling, while a primary resource in the process of faith formation, is not an isolated one.

Enriching the Spiritual Atmosphere

The transferring of the flame of faith is not a foregone conclusion even with faithful role models in the lives of children: “First, we can no longer assume that whole generations of Christians are learning the faith by osmosis or dumb luck. God has no grandchildren. We have ahead of us a huge challenge of teaching and sharing the faith” (Honeycutt 263). The transmission of the Christian faith from generation to generation must be an intentional process. The prevailing culture of America is among the most comprehensive threats to a casual Christianity: “Paganism is the air we breathe, the water we drink. It captures us, it converts our young, it subverts the church” (Hauerwas and Willimon 151). Moral pollution is pervasive; the spiritual environment has become toxic: “The bottom line is that a person’s moral foundation is either based upon Christian spirituality and thus drawn from God’s Word, or it is based on worldly perspective (i.e., pagan spirituality)” (Barna, *Transforming Children* 53). Like a fish living in polluted

water takes on the poison of its environment, so human beings are impacted by their surroundings.

The invasion of media-driven ideas into the hearts and minds of children through television is a prime example of the contamination of the moral atmosphere in a home. Many families leave the television on continuously without any supervision or monitoring by responsible adults (Kaiser 30; see Figure 2.7).



Source: Kaiser 30.

Figure 2.7. Percent of 8-to-18-year-olds who have TV on when no one is watching.

The air that surrounds families is literally saturated with messages that are vying for the hearts and souls of their children: “On May 24, 2006, CBS News reported that one third of families in the United States have television on all the time and that 20 percent of toddlers have a television in their own bedrooms” (May and Stonehouse 367). A recent 2010 study by the Kaiser Family Foundation reports those percentages as increasing. The

percentage of young people ages eight to eighteen with a television in their bedrooms has increased to 71 percent (31). Children are being flooded with the images and ideas on television. Children with television in their bedrooms watch over an hour more of television a day more than do their counterparts who do not have a television in their bedrooms (34). Adult guidance is a key factor in providing a safe media environment for children.

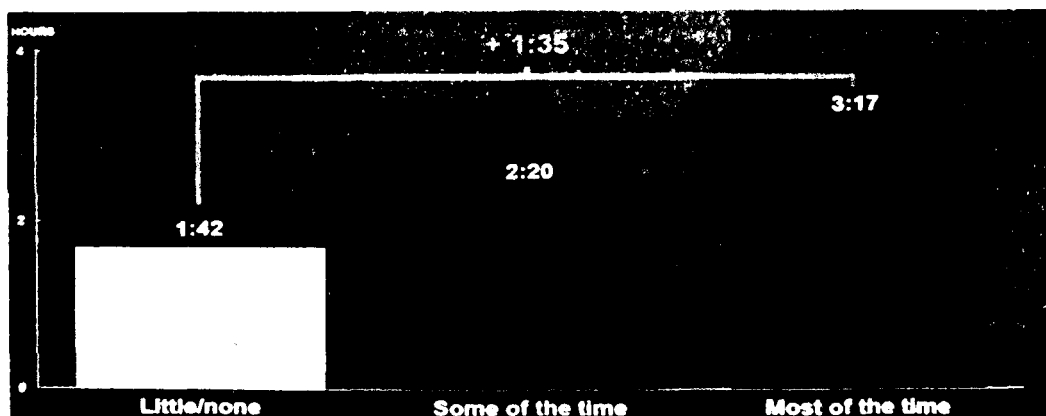
While television is an undeniable part of society, the programming is not neutral. Just as science has confirmed what was suspected about second-hand tobacco smoke, that it is detrimental to those exposed to it, unrestrained exposure to media can be harmful: “To let the television run uncontrolled is to let the media give us an anti-Christian master story and shape our world view and that of our children” (Stonehouse, *Joining Children* 199). Parents are the primary filter monitoring the influences to which children are exposed, but grandparents can be a support and secondary source of defense and discernment.

The media smog has permeated much of culture, and society must make an intentional response now. The family is the primary source of security: “Within a world, where much is depersonalized and media-ridden, one of the most pressing needs is for a strong reinforcement of the home and the local church” (Anderson, Cohen, Morpew, Scott, and Strachan 24). Grandparents can be an invaluable resource and trusted ally in a culture that is at odds with God.

Grandparents can help establish a positive and caring climate in which faith can mature. A supportive and secure environment is essential for the healthy development of a child: “Parents who establish warm, caring, congenial relationships with their children

are communicating their own moral values without saying a word” (Strommen and Hardel 89). The spiritual atmosphere within a family can be a positive or negative influence on the faith development of a young person: “Because children work out their earliest years of greatest dependency in these formative relationships, their family’s ethos (way of life) and their family’s mythos (perspective on life) will profoundly mold the values and faith of the child” (Martinson 401). A generationally enriched *ethos* and *mythos* is conducive to an environment in which faith can grow, mature, and bear good fruit. Discernment over media exposure is an important element in the family milieu.

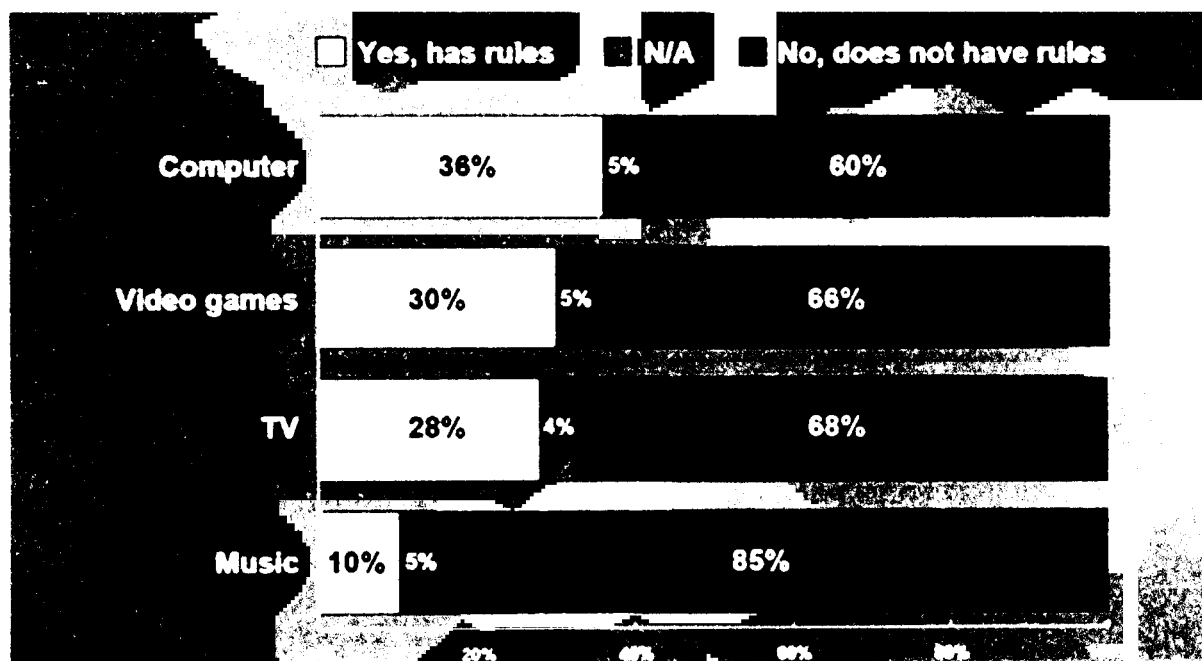
While television has a vast array of viewing options, the basic decision comes down to the appropriateness of a particular program. The judgment of when to change the channel or turn off the television is one of the control mechanisms for the moral climate of the family. Some families abdicate their control by leaving the television on even when no one is watching. This passive decision not only increases the amount of time children view television it also abdicates the control over what is being watched (Kaiser 33; see Figures 2.7 and 2.8).



Source: Kaiser 33.

Figure 2.8. Amount of TV watched when left on all day.

The development of family standards for the use of media is an important step in creating a climate conducive for Christian growth in the family. Though the setting of rules seems like common sense, it is not a common practice in the majority of homes (Kaiser 32; see Figure 2.9). These choices can be compared to a parental decision to let a child go outside and play. During a storm or severe cold, responsible parents will not let their children be exposed to the potentially harmful elements. The act of sheltering a child is appropriate and wise in the case of weather and concerning the use of technology.

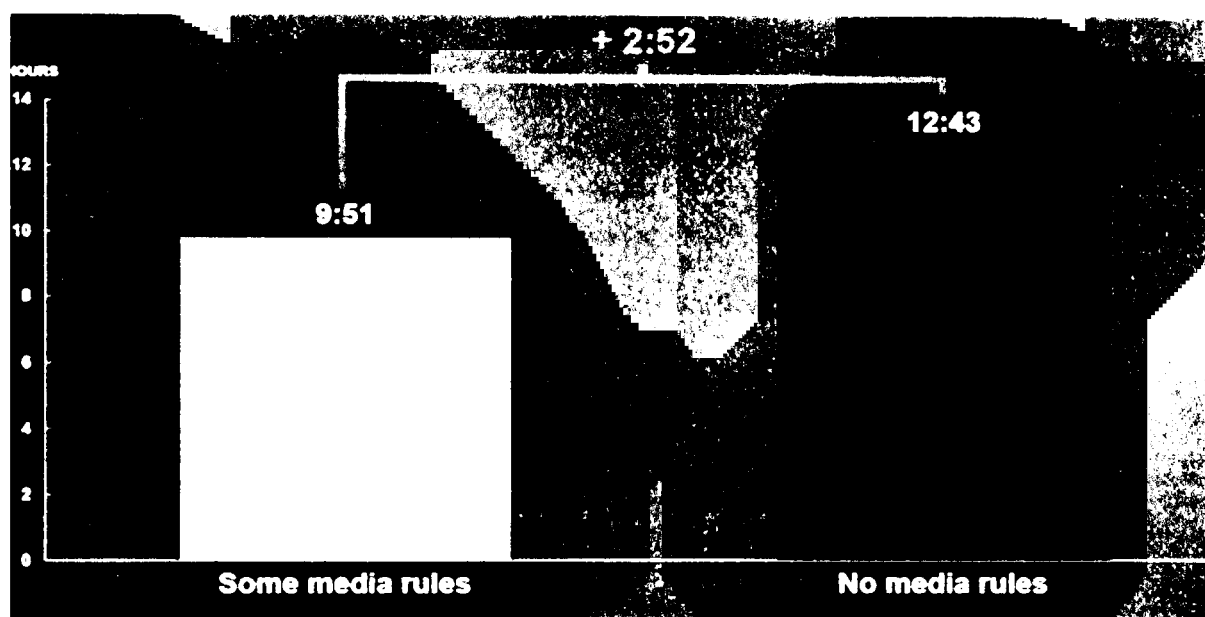


Source: Kaiser 32.

Figure 2.9. The effect of parental rules on use of media by children.

With the development of the computer, the Internet, mobile devices, and the ever-expanding arena of applications, the interactive possibilities for the family are almost limitless. Having a set of family media standards, that is clear, consistent, agreed upon, and upheld, is essential. The impact of family standards can be seen in the difference in

the media exposure time between children in families that have rules and those that do not. The image of a tripod is helpful in providing a concept of a stable environment for faith formation. Parents establish guidelines, grandparents support the guidelines by upholding the standards, and children benefit from the guidelines by having a consistent and positive environment in which to grow and mature (Kaiser 35; see Figure 2.10).



Source: Kaiser 35.

Figure 2.10. How rules affect media exposure.

Perspectives on Intentional Spiritual Formation

Spiritual formation is an ongoing and ever-evolving process. M. Robert

Mulholland, Jr. makes a case for the inclusive nature of spiritual formation:

Every action taken, every response made, every dynamic of relationship, every thought held, every emotion allowed: these are the minuscule arenas where, bit by bit,... we are shaped into some kind of being.... Life is by its very nature, spiritual formation. (25)

An expansive view of faith formation includes that all that happens in life and how people respond to it. Many scholars have examined the spiritual nurture and have come up with various theories about the process and what elements are essential. For the purpose of this study, I focused on a developmental perspective of faith formation within the context of the extended nuclear family, meaning children, parents, and grandparents.

Theological foundation for developmental theory. The first chapter of Genesis outlines a developmental process for creation. It moves from, “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth” (vs. 1), through the six days creation, and concludes with, “God saw everything that he had made, and indeed it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day” (vs. 31). Creation is not a haphazard process but one of orderly development. Each day builds on the previous day. Each ethereal word spoken prepares the way for the next expression of the *logos* to take form in the realm of energy, matter, and life.

John captures the developmental nature of creation as well in the prologue to his gospel:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. (John 1:1-3)

With the beauty of poetic expression, John captures the power of the Genesis 1 account of creation. He also conveys the key concept that all things came from and were developed by the power of the breath of God through the word (*logos*).

A single verse, John 1:14, captures an expression of theological brilliance and developmental theory as John brings continuity of the word in the form of Jesus. That which was word became flesh. The concrete expression of God’s grace and truth came to

live among humanity so that all believers might see and experience the glory of God. God who created humanity knew that humanity needed to have an incarnational, in-the-flesh savior.

The Apostle Paul describes a developmental progression in the plan of salvation as he explains God's action in Christ:

With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (Eph. 1:8b-10)

A literal translation of the "fullness of time" is *the pregnant moment*. Paul uses the embryotic stage of human life to illustrate God's plan for the deliverance of heaven and earth.

The human developmental process of moving from a child to maturity parallels the Christian's growing faith in the writings of Paul: "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways" (1 Cor. 13:11). Elsewhere in the New Testament, Peter admonishes, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:18). These scriptural examples coincide with the developmental assertion that to be human is to be in a continuous process of maturation and growth (Wilhoit and Dettoni 27). A review of developmental theory, faith formation, and family dynamics reveals a convergence of thought and practice.

Developmental theory and theorist. All theories, from ones dealing with the dynamics of physics to those addressing educational principles, are based on assumptions. One of the key assumptions of developmental theory is that of stages. A picture of stair steps would be an appropriate model for developmental thinking. In order

for individuals to reach the highest point, they must start at the bottom and take one step at a time, each step building on the preceding step.

Jean Piaget, cognitive development. Jean Piaget (1896-1980) was a Swiss psychologist and academic whose lifelong quest was to understand how individuals acquire knowledge and understanding:

His answer is that the growth of knowledge is a progressive construction of logically embedded structures superseding one another by a process of inclusion of lower less powerful logical means into higher and more powerful ones up to adulthood. Therefore, children's logic and modes of thinking are initially entirely different from those of adults. (Presnell)

His school of thought on knowledge acquisition came to be known as cognitive development. Even though Piaget explained the acquisition of knowledge through sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational developmental stages, he did not believe the growth in understanding happened at a steady rate (McLeod). For Piaget, jumps in understanding take place when the equilibrium of the existing pool of knowledge is thrown off balance. This leap in knowledge happens when a child's schemas (building blocks of knowledge) are not adequate to deal with new information. If the new experience cannot be assimilated by the existing schema, then the jump in understanding must take place to accommodate the new experience. Instead of experiencing a steady progression through the stages of cognitive development, cognitive growth happens in sequential and predictable leaps and bounds.

Piaget's understanding of schemas is applicable both to the grandchildren and grandparents in the study. The grandparents use and understanding of technology was an area for schematic growth. The grandchildren's world of faith development nurtured

through the intentional relationship building and faith sharing of the grandparents was primed for dramatic growth.

Lawrence Kohlberg, moral development. Lawrence Kohlberg (1927-87) built upon Piaget's theory of cognitive development and applied and expanded it to address moral development. Kohlberg's conceptual framework includes three levels and six stages of moral development. The three levels are preconventional, conventional, and postconventional autonomous. Each level has two stages. Individuals move from the lowest stage to the highest. The lowest stage is the punishment-obedience orientation, which is based on compliance because of an outside authority. The highest stage is one of universal ethical principle orientation, which is an internalized and high moral standard of self-regulation (Crain 118-36). Kohlberg's ideas on moral development inform this study as young people move into the interpersonal stage. The influence of grandparents can be a key factor.

Erik H. Erikson, psychosocial development. Erikson (1902-94) was a clinical psychologist influenced by the thinking of Freud. He conceptualized a theory of psychosocial development built on eight life stages. Each stage had the possibility of polarized outcomes for the development tasks present during the different age periods of life.

The stages are trust versus mistrust (birth-1 year), autonomy versus shame and doubt (2-3 years), initiative versus guilt (3-5 years), industry versus inferiority (6-12 years), identity versus role confusion (13-18 years), intimacy versus isolation (young adulthood), generativity versus stagnation (middle adulthood), and ego identity versus despair (old age; Erikson 247-74). Each stage centers on a challenge that shapes the self-

perception of the individual, or causes an identity crisis. The healthy resolution of each stage enables an individual to move to the next stage with positive emotional momentum. The unhealthy individual trends toward a growing dysfunction and stagnation.

Erikson's stage of generativity versus stagnation is a catalytic concept in this study. With the slight adaptation of moving Erikson's central focus from parents to grandparents, the description of generativity becomes a key construct for grandparenting: "Generativity, then, is primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation" (267). Grandparents acting in the role of faith mentors fit well with the description of generativity.

Lev S. Vygotsky, social development. Vygotsky (1896-1934) is a counterbalance to his contemporary, developmental psychologist Piaget. Vygotsky recognized the need to take into consideration the context of the developmental process. His school of thought is known as social development theory. One of the key assertions of Vygotsky was, "Learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological function" (90). The understanding of individual development, for Vygotsky, must include the social and cultural context. Higher mental processes in the individual are influenced by the social processes and priorities of the dominate culture (Willhoit and Dettoni 125). Vygotsky's theory also includes the "zone of proximal development," defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky 86). Vygotsky's

concepts of the “zone of proximal development” and social and cultural context on the development of individuals coincide with the theoretical constructs of this study.

Faith development theory, James W. Fowler and John H. Westerhoff, III.

James W. Fowler builds upon the work of Piaget and Kohlberg to present a theory of faith development consisting of six stages. For Fowler faith is “dynamic, evolving, and relational—an integral part of our lives, . . . shaping the way we see and make meaning in our lives, controlling our values and perceptions and exercise of power” (Wilhoit and Dettoni 86). The six stages move from a simple intuitive/projective concept about God in early childhood to a more concrete stage of mythic/literal understanding in childhood. Stage three is synthetic/conventional where integration of faith often times finds expression through identification with a specific belief system. Many individuals remain at this level throughout life. Stage four is labeled the individuative/reflective stage where critical examination of beliefs is the key challenge. The skepticism of stage four moves an individual to the more expansive or mystical stage five, known as conjunctive faith. It allows the individual to return to a synthesized faith with more vibrancy and without the legalistic limitations of the earlier experience of the conventional stage. The final stage of universalizing faith is a freeing realization of participation with the divine (Fowler 122-211). In Fowler’s framework the progression in faith development also serves as a de-facto filter, with fewer and fewer individuals moving to the higher stages.

One of John H. Westerhoff, III’s favorite quotes from the early Church father Tertullian, “Christians are fashioned, not born,” captures the challenge of faith formation. Westerhoff’s dominant concern as expressed in his seminal work *Will Our Children Have Faith* has been to help the church move from a schooling model of Christian education to

a catechetical model of Christian formation (Bramer 334-39). Westerhoff also offers a fresh organic approach to a developmental concept of styles of faith. Instead of using a staircase as the conceptual framework for faith formation, he uses tree rings (*Will Our Children* 89-104). Starting at the center and moving outward, the rings styles/stages of faith are titled experienced, affiliated, searching, and finally owned. Each ring represents a higher level of internalization and maturity of faith:

Individuals in any of these stages have a legitimate faith. When we have an owned or mature faith we are moving among all the stages at different times in our lives. We must never neglect our experienced, affiliated, or searching faith components. Actually, having a mature faith means we can draw from all of our past developmental stages as we are always changing and redesigning our lives as Christians. (Compton)

Using tree rings as an image of growth and maturity captures the biblical images of Psalm 1 and Isaiah 61. In both these passages, a person who is mature in their faith is compared to a stately tree.

No one theory sufficiently covers all the aspects of the grandparent/grandchild relationship. The targeted age for the study of 6-12-years-old reveals some important developmental opportunities with the grandchildren for grandparents (see Table 2.2). Preadolescence is the age of Piaget's concrete stage, where personal example and mentoring can be particularly effective. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development is reflective of the extended family as a source of formation. Erikson's identity versus role confusion is applicable as grandparents can help grandchildren have a sense of who they are and from where they came. The interpersonal aspects of Kohlberg's moral development have implications for grandparent/grandchild dynamics at this age. Westerhoff's concepts of affiliated and searching faith lend themselves to the formative impact of a grandparent on the faith development of a preadolescent grandchild.

Table 2.2. Developmental Theories and Theorists

Theorist	Theory	Age and Stage				
		Birth-1 year	2 year-3 year	4 year-5 year	6 year-12 year	13 year+
Jean Piaget 1896-1980	Cognitive development	Sensorimotor	Preoperational		Concrete	Early formal
Lev Vygotsky 1896-1934	Social Cultural development	Vygotsky does not emphasize developmental stages per se, but the role of cultural and social factors in a process of sequential learning. An individual is influenced in the "zone of proximal development" through instruction by teachers, parents, culture, and society. Each learning experience builds on the previous experience.				
Erik Erikson 1902-1994	Psychological development	Trust v. mistrust	Autonomy v. shame and doubt	Initiative v. guilt	Industry v. inferiority	Identity v. role confusion
		Level 1: Preconventional				Level 2: Conventional
Lawrence Kohlberg 1927-1987	Moral development	Stage 1: Obedience/Punishment				
		Stage 2: Individualism Exchange				
		Stage #: Interpersonal				
James Fowler 1940-	Faith development	Undifferentiated	Intuitive projective	Mythical/literal	Synthetic/conventional	
John Westerhoff, III 1933-	Faith development	Westerhoff's paradigm uses the image of tree rings instead of stair-step stages. An individual not only moves forward in growth but can also move fluidly back and forth from ring to ring				
		Experienced ↑	* Affiliated	* Searching	* Owned	

Search Institute and developmental assets. The beauty of developmental theory is that each new adaptation of existing schools of thought serves as an illustration of developmental theory at work. Merton Strommen, a Lutheran pastor, psychologist, researcher, educator, and theorist, brought together various streams of developmental theory while forming two research institutes. The first was the Search Institute founded in 1958 ("Our Mission, Vision, and Values"). The second was Vibrant Faith Ministries founded in 1987 (Vibrant Faith Ministries).

The Search Institute began as the Lutheran Youth Research Center in 1958. It did research concerning the needs of youth and the process of faith formation for a few denominations. After several manifestations as an independent nonprofit organization, it

was renamed the Search Institute (SI) in 1977. Under the leadership of Peter Benson (1985-2011) the Search Institute has become a river of research and resources contributing to developmental theory and practice. Out of their research came the helpful concept of 40 Developmental Assets (see Appendix B):

In 1990, Search Institute released a framework of 40 Developmental Assets, which identifies a set of skills, experiences, relationships, and behaviors that enable young people to develop into successful and contributing adults. Over the following two decades, the Developmental Assets framework and approach to youth development became the most frequently cited and widely utilized in the world, creating what Stanford University's William Damon described as a "sea change" in adolescent development. ("Developmental Assets")

The forty assets can be seen as a nutritious buffet consisting of a healthy developmental diet of cognitive, psychological, social, moral, and faith factors, along with additional developmental components.

The research has been extensive and the results have been impressive:

Over time [since 1990], studies of more than 4 million young people consistently show that the more assets young people have the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviors and the more likely they are to thrive. ("Developmental Assets").

The absence or presence of these assets has proven to be a better indicator of high-risk behavior or thriving than poverty and being raised by a single parent. The foundational philosophy and consistent findings of SI coincide with the hypothesis of this study. The resources available through SI were easily adapted and applied to the grandparent/grandchild relationship.

Vibrant Faith. The second organization to be birthed by Strommen was the Youth and Family Institute in 1987. It was later renamed Vibrant Faith Ministries in 2010. The initial vision of Strommen for the Youth and Family Institute was "to take the

best research and academic insight, embed it in the Christian theology of the cross, and instill an evangelical spirit of ministry to help congregations strengthen families and nurture faith” (“About Us”). The combination of cutting-edge research, biblically grounded theological insight, a strong commitment to the family, innovative use of technology, and rootedness in the church have proven to be a dynamic mix of factors.

The present mission statement of Vibrant Faith Ministries expresses this confluence of emphases: “Vibrant Faith Ministries is a *catalyst* for Christian congregations, communities *striving* to practice vibrant faith in a *dynamic world*” (“About Us”). The understanding and application of some of the key concepts are expanded in a brief explanation:

A “*catalyst*” affects change and the rate of change. We recognize that followers of Jesus need to change their practices and how they organize themselves in order to remain faithful, relevant and life transforming for these times. We are “*striving*” to live a vibrant faith because God’s Spirit is never completely done with us. We are always being renewed and called to make a difference in Jesus’ name. We do this work in a “*dynamic world*.” Everything is rapidly changing around us. There is no longer a “one-size-fits-all” when it comes to faith, so we must serve as curators, dialogue partners, consultants, coaches, cheerleaders and researchers to further the work of God’s kingdom. (original emphasis; “About Us”)

Out of their clear sense of mission, Vibrant Faith Ministries (VFM) sees an opportunity to use the tools of the virtual world to create a viable faith. “Vibrant Faith Ministries believes that training, utilizing the appropriate resources, social networking, and the smart use of technology are key to building strong leaders in homes, congregations, and communities” (“About Us”). The mission and stated opportunities of VFM are a perfect fit with the goals of this study.

Application of Developmental Theory to Faith Formation in the Extended Nuclear Family through the Use of Technology

For the purpose of this study the 40 Developmental Assets listed by the SI and four of the six effective faith-formational practices identified by VFM were used as the catalysts for the intervention. The 40 Developmental Assets and four faith-formational practices took place within the context of the grandparent/grandchild relationship using appropriate technology to enhance contact possibilities and minimize barriers between grandparents and grandchildren. The 40 Developmental Assets were used as an informed baseline out of which the six faith-formational practices grew.

40 Developmental Assets. The Search Institute has divided their 40 Developmental Assets into two major groupings. One grouping has twenty external and the other grouping has twenty internal assets. The two grouping consists of four clusters of assets reflecting a functional interconnection. The external grouping cluster includes support, empowerment, boundaries/expectations, and constructive use of time. The internal grouping cluster involves commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity.

Two assets were intrinsic to this study. They were assets 3, other adult relationships, and 14, adult role models. The relationship of grandparents to their grandchildren naturally fills both of these asset categories. As stated previously grandparents can be described as natural mentors. The focal point of this study has been the encouragement, equipping, and activation of grandparents to fulfill the vital role of mentoring.

At least six other assets met the three important benchmarks of the study. The key standards for the assets were achievability within the grandparent grandchild relationship, appropriateness for technological adaptation, and finally, applicability to faith formation. The six assets that met these criteria were numbers 1, family support, 2, positive family communication, 9, service to others, 11, family boundaries, 19, religious community, and 20, time at home. Predictably all these assets were in the external grouping. The external grouping included those assets that acted upon the subject, while the internal grouping was made up of those assets that acted within the subject.

Four selected faith-formation practices. VFM has a multifaceted approach to their ministry. One of the specific facets is a blog that is linked to their primary Web site called Vibrant Faith @ Home. The focus of the blog is to bring the practices of faith into the home through the use of technology. It features six areas for faith-forming activities. These are caring conversations, ritual and tradition, prayer, Bible story, learning about faith, and serving others.

Four of the six faith-formation practices were used during this study. They were caring conversations, ritual and tradition, Bible story, and prayer. These were selected based on three criteria: adaptability to technological interaction, capacity to deepen the relational quality between grandparents and grandchildren, and formational impact.

Stonehouse helped clarify the consideration of the six faith-formational factors. She addressed the inclusion of a service component by saying, “My experience in research with students doing simultaneous service projects over a distance has proven difficult. The age of your target audience could also prove problematic” (Telephone

interview). Keeping this experience in mind helped to streamline and simplify the research procedures by excluding a service project.

Donald Joy gives valuable insights when evaluating the appropriateness of what topics to include in the modules. One poignant comment is, “I would think focusing on the relational aspects would be the primary concern over the instructional in the grandparent/grandchild interaction.” With Joy’s sage advice, caring conversations became the foundation for the study and moved learning about the faith down the priority scale.

Both Stonehouse and Joy emphasize the power of story and ritual to engage the imaginations, make an impression on the hearts, and help shape the faith of children. Stonehouse says, “Adults set the stage for children to enter the story and meet God. Children learn best through experience and stories” (“Godly Play”). The experience can be a repeated ritual or a family tradition that conveys meaning and godly self-awareness to the child. The VFM Web site gave easy access and a variety of experiences that could be adapted for technological interaction.

Research Design

An explanatory, mixed-methods design was used in this research project. The research design was a two-phase approach where I collected the quantitative data first and then the qualitative data to help explain the quantitative findings (Creswell 560). This sequence of investigation is used frequently in educational research. It fit well with the primary area of investigation of the study—grandparents serving as mentors in the faith-formation process of grandchildren through the utilization of technology to overcome geographical distance.

Pre-Intervention Quantitative Inventory

The pre-intervention phase of the study used researcher-generated questionnaires. These instruments incorporated short answer questions, six-point Likert scales, and limited range responses. The data gathered through these inventories provided a general picture for the starting point of the research intervention.

Six-Week Intervention and Qualitative Input

The second phase was a six-week intervention. Once a week, for six weeks, a seminar was held with the grandparents. Each week the seminar addressed one of the four faith-formation practices. These practices were caring conversations, ritual and tradition, prayer, and Bible story.

Each week the seminars contained three learning modules. These modules included topic presentation, assimilation activities, and practice of technological applications. Part of the design incorporated peer mentors. The more technologically savvy grandparents assisted the more technologically inexperienced grandparents.

During this phase the participants used an online journal to gain qualitative input. Their journaling, referred to as The Formation Forum, followed a researcher-developed protocol. The protocol incorporated instructions that focused the participants' entries on the three spheres of the project and the specific faith-formational practice presented that week.

Another layer of qualitative input was focused discussion at the end of each session. Participants responded to open-ended questions focusing on their experience in the study. Responses were recorded, categorized, and analyzed.

Post-Intervention Quantitative and Qualitative Feedback

The final phase of the study utilized post-intervention inventories paralleling the pre-intervention inventories. The procedures gave quantitative measurements to establish the impact of the intervention on the participants. The results were compared with those taken at the beginning of the study, and variations in the responses were categorized, noted, and analyzed.

A qualitative post-intervention focus group with an open-ended, semi-structured interview protocol gathered pertinent data. Lisa S. Whiting asserts that semi-structured interviews are a primary means of gathering in-depth, personal, and intimate information (36). Focus groups are a tool of choice in studies of social dynamics and interactions where individuals share personal stories, vulnerabilities need to be respected, and individual perceptions are an important part of investigatory feedback. The four primary elements of a semi-structured interview are (1) an interview scheduled in advance at a designated time, (2) an interview organized around a set of predetermined questions, (3) an interview where other questions emerge from dialogue, and (4) an interview that lasts from thirty minutes to several hours (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 315-17). One benefit to this research format is that it is readily adaptable to technology.

The design of the study utilized the advantages of technological applications in research. Online focus groups allowed flexibility of scheduling and eliminated the need for all participants to be in the same room at the same time (Hopewell 22). The incorporation of technology in the data gathering reinforced for the grandparents the use of technology in their relationships with their grandchildren.

Summary

The punctuation of the title of this study, Grandparenting the Next Generation: Fanning the Flame of Faith, was much debated. The placement of a single comma renders two very distinctive, yet appropriate meanings. The title I choose highlights a more traditional identification of grandparenting as the process of passing on values to subsequent generations. The second possible meaning comes from placing a comma in the title after grandparenting. The change in punctuation emphasizes the transformation happening in the process of grandparenting. Technology has the potential to usher in a new generation of grandparenting techniques and opportunities. This study sought to capture both aspects of grandparenting as the Christian faith is passed on to the next generation of believers in new, but faithful ways.

The literature review demonstrates the validity of employing grandparents as a vital link in the passing on of the torch of faith. It traces the embers of the glowing torch as it has passed from Moses teaching the *shema* to the children of Israel as they entered the Promised Land, to Jesus going to Jerusalem with his family, and down to Timothy receiving the flame of faith from his grandmother, Lois. Those same sparks ignited the idea of the home being the “little church” for Chrysostom, the Small Catechism being the guide for heads of households to teach their children for Luther, and Susanna Wesley praying earnestly around the coals of the hearth in her home for her children, only to have the strange warming in the heart of her son, John, burst into an undying desire to make the world his parish.

The literature also examined the next generation of technologies that reshaped human interaction. Like former generations of grandparents who adjusted to the printing

press, the automobile, the radio, and the TV, the current generation of grandparents must continue to adapt to the expanding implications of technology. These new tools of technology empower families to convey “the old, old story ... of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love” (Adams) in a new way by means of the ageless connection between grandparents and their grandchildren.

Chapter 3 presents the research design and methodology, exploring how grandparents effectively apply technology in the faith-formation process with their grandchildren. Chapter 4 examines the findings of the study. Chapter 5 contains an analysis of the study, possible applications of the intervention results, and new areas of research for the next generation of grandparents and grandchildren.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Problem and Purpose

The problem addressed in this dissertation was to build a bridge over the generational gap, the chasm of geographic distance, and the spiritual gulf between grandparents and grandchildren using technology. While families are scattered and physical distances between family members are greater than ever, the possibilities of connectedness among families is also greater today than at any time in history because of technology. The promise of building a technology bridge between grandparents and grandchildren and using it in the process of faith formation was the focus of the project.

An explanatory, mixed-methods approach to research determined the effectiveness of the technological bridge. The research process utilized both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Some of the key components of the assessment were researcher-developed inventories, journaling, and guided discussion focus groups.

This study examined how four faith-formation practices, shared between grandparents and grandchildren using technology, impacted their attitude and use of technology in the faith-formation process. Grandparents, grandchildren, and God coming together over the Internet form a unique network, the kingdom of God.

Research Questions and/or Hypotheses

The confluence of relational, formational, and technological spheres compose the foundation of the research project. The relational sphere examined intergenerational relationships between grandparents and grandchildren. The formational sphere looked at the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren as a catalyst in the faith-

formation process. The technological sphere addressed the question of how virtual tools can be used to make a vital difference in the interconnectedness of grandchildren and grandparents.

The first research question dealt with the starting point of the grandparents in the three spheres. The second question looked at what changes took place in the grandparents as a result of the intervention. The third question explored how the intervention impacted the faith formation of the grandchildren.

Research Question #1

What were the grandparents' understandings, attitudes, and uses of faith-formational practices combined with technology prior to the six-week intervention?

The first research question ascertained the starting point of the grandparents prior to the intervention. Quantitative investigation methods assessed the grandparents' understandings, attitudes, and use of technology in the faith-formation process with their grandchildren (see Appendix C).

Questions 1-4 on the pre-intervention assessment tool (PAT) dealt with general background information about the grandparents and grandchildren. Questions 5-8 on the Likert scale section of the questionnaire also addressed the general background information about the existing relationship between the grandparent and grandchild.

The pre-intervention faith-formational attitudes, abilities, and practices of the grandparents with their grandchildren were the focus of questions 9-21 on the PAT. The six-point Likert scale ranged from *excellent* to *very poor* to ascertain the information. Each of the four faith-formational practices used in the study had three related questions. One question dealt with the ability or competency of the grandparents in the particular

area. Another question measured the grandparents' attitudes toward a particular area of faith formation. The final question gauged the grandparents' use and practice of a specific faith-formatinal tool as it pertained to their grandchildren.

The four faith-formatinal areas the PAT addressed were caring conversations, prayer, Bible stories, and traditions. Questions 9-11 on the PAT dealt with caring conversations, 12-14 explored prayer, 15-17 sharing Bible stories, and 18-19 family traditions. Question 21 asked the respondents to rate their relationship with God.

The pre-intervention information technology survey (PITS) addressed the technological component of Research Question #1. The questions asked about the attitudes, abilities, and practices of the grandparents relating to technology (see Appendix C). Question 7 on the PITS addressed the ability and comfort level of the grandparents in the use of specific forms of technology. Questions 1-6 focused on commonly used technological hardware. These questions utilized a six-point Likert scale ranging from *expert* to *unfamiliar*. Given the dynamic nature of developing technology, question 7 allowed the respondents to include additional technologies not specifically addressed by other questions.

In the second section of the PITS, questions 8-14 focused on the technological applications frequently used in social interactions. On questions 8-13, a six-point Likert scale ranged from *expert* to *unfamiliar* to rate the participants' familiarity and ability with various applications. Given the dynamic nature of applications, question 14 allowed the respondents to include additional applications not listed.

On page two of the PITS, questions 15-27 concentrated on the types of technology grandparents used to maintain and enhance their relationships with their

grandchildren. Questions 15-26 used forced choices that focused not only on the type of technology but also on the frequency of use. Question 27 was open-ended to allow participants freedom to add additional technologies.

On page three of the PITS, questions 28-40 concentrated on the use of technology in the faith-formation process. Questions 28-39 used forced choices that focused not only on the type of technology used but also on the frequency of use. Question 40 was open-ended to allow those answering the freedom to incorporate additional technologies.

Question 41 dealt with the participants' attitudes toward technology. It used a 1-6 Likert scale ranging from *eager-early-adapter* to *non-adapter*. The question gauged the respondents' attitudes toward technology and how they impacted their participation. Another corollary measured the influence of attitudes of the grandparents toward technology in the faith-formation outcomes of their grandchildren.

Research Question #2

What changes in the grandparents were observed in their understandings, attitudes, and uses of faith-formational practices combined with technology after the six-week intervention?

The second research question explored the impact of the intervention on the grandparents through a mixed-methods approach. The collection of data took place by qualitative and quantitative procedures. The examination of the data determined the effect of the intervention by seeking to identify observable and verifiable changes in the understandings, attitudes, and use of faith-formational practices through technology by the participants.

Qualitative data was collected in three ways. The first was a debriefing after each seminar session. A protocol named Session Interaction Guide (SIG), made up of open-ended probing questions focusing on attitudes and understanding, provided immediate feedback from the participants. I served as the moderator, and a designated individual served as secretary to write down comments. These sessions were tape recorded. All interactions followed specific protocols (see Appendix G). Analysis of the notes and recordings identified important themes.

The use of online journaling during the intervention served as the second qualitative measure to answer Research Question #2. The study participants recorded their cognitive, affective, and faith-formational insights, musings, struggles, and growth edges using an established blog site. The researcher-developed blog interaction guide focused participants on the three spheres of study. The blog not only aided in the collection of data but reinforced the use of technology. Through analysis of the blog, I found and categorized discernible trends.

The last qualitative piece of the puzzle for Research Question #2 was a final evaluation focus group. A researcher-developed protocol named the final interaction guide (FIG) started, stimulated, and encouraged study-related interaction and insights. I served as the moderator, using open-ended questions to initiate the conversation and probing questions to deepen discussion. A secretary wrote and audio-recorded the interactions of the focus group for later analysis.

Exploration of this research question also utilized quantitative methods. The PAT and PITS established the pre-intervention baseline to answer the first research question. I developed two parallel instruments, the final assessment tool (FAT) and the final

information technology survey (FITS), to provide a comparison between grandparents' pre-intervention and post-intervention understandings, attitudes, and practices in using technology as a resource in the faith formation of their grandchildren (see Appendix C).

The FAT served as a post-intervention comparison to the FIT survey. The six-point Likert scale asked the respondents to select on a continuum between *improved greatly* to *declined greatly*. Questions 1-4 of the FAT focused on the general relationship between grandparents and grandchildren. Question 6-18 dealt with the faith-formational components of the study. Questions 5-7 on the FAT dealt with caring conversations, 8-10 explored prayer, 11-13 focused on sharing Bible stories, and 14-16 examined the area of family traditions. Question 17 asked the respondents to rate the impact of study on their relationship with God.

The FITS provided data from the participants in the study to gauge the effectiveness of the intervention. A six-point Likert scale was used. Questions 1-10 focused on the change of the participating grandparents' understandings, attitudes, and uses of faith-formational practices combined with technology. Questions 11 and 12 addressed the grandparents' understandings and attitudes toward being faith mentors to their grandchildren.

Research Question #3

How did the six-week intervention impact the faith and relational perceptions of the grandchildren?

Research Question #3 focused on the impact of the intervention on the grandchildren's faith and relationship with their grandparents. The use of technology was an essential component in gaining qualitative data from the grandchildren. The

grandparents used a researcher-designed protocol called the grandparent/grandchild interaction guide (GIG) to have an ongoing conversation via Skype with their grandchildren concerning the grandchildren's experience of the intervention activities. The grandparents recorded their narrative input and summarized the conversation at each seminar session.

At the conclusion of the intervention period, the grandparents, parents, and grandchildren held final Skype conversations to respond to guided questions. The final conversations focused not on cognitive content but on relational and faith-related components. The object of the interaction was to garner the perceptions of the grandchildren. The final portion of the GIG used open-ended questions and sought the perceptions and feelings of the children.

Grandparents were intentionally used as the interviewers to allow more natural interactions and secure settings for the grandchildren. The various levels of ability and comfort on the part of the grandparents in their interviewing skills introduced a potential for skewed results. To lessen the effect of the variance, each seminar session ended with a brief focus group interaction, which modeled the process for the grandparents. After the first two weeks of the intervention, each grandparent led the discussion at subsequent seminar sessions as the larger group broke into smaller groups.

Population and Participants

The target audience for this study was composed of grandparent/grandchild pairs from the Lutheran Church by the Lake and the McCormick area. The goal was to recruit ten to twenty grandparents who would be willing to participate with one of their grandchildren. The gender mix or match of both grandparent and grandchild was not a

qualifying factor. The grandchildren had to be in the age range of 6 to 12-years-old and live more than twenty miles away from their grandparents.

These grandparent/grandchild pairs had to meet four criteria. The first was a desire to enrich their relationship with each other. The second was a willingness to share their faith and participate in faith-formation activities. The third was that they could not live within twenty miles of each other. The fourth was an openness to the use of technology as a tool to accomplish the first two criteria.

Design of the Study

The study examined the use of technology as a tool to enhance the natural mentoring relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren in the faith-formation process of grandchildren. The modern extended family often spread over great distances, causes obstacles for the natural caring and mentoring relationships of the extended family to work effectively. The project used technology in an effective way to help bring together these three powerful components of loving grandchildren, caring grandparents, and a growing relationship with a gracious God.

The project implemented a classic design of three sequential phases. The first was the pre-intervention investigation of the attitudes, understandings, and abilities, of the participants. This segment used quantitative instruments to establish the initial competencies and attitudes of those involved in the study.

A foundational part of the pre-intervention phase was the use of 40 Developmental Assets from the Search Institute. These forty assets are constructive attributes and affirming life experiences that assist young people in making positive life choices so they become compassionate, contributing, flourishing adults. Eight specific

assets out of the forty were examined. These assets were family support, positive family communication, other adult relationships, service to others, family boundaries, adult role models, religious community, and time at home. The rationale of utilizing the 40 Developmental Assets was to reinforce for the grandparents, parents, and grandchildren the importance and impact of the concepts that were used in the study. The time, energy, effort, and prayer invested in the grandparent-grandchild relationship pays rich dividends in the lives of all who participate.

The second phase was the six-week intervention. Each week focused on a faith-formational topic. I specifically chose the sequence of topics to move from the least threatening spiritually to the more intimate expressions of faith. Each intervention session lasted from ninety minutes to two hours with grandparents participating in four different learning activities. These activities were topic presentation, assimilation experiences, practice of technological applications, and qualitative feedback opportunities. Ongoing journaling and focused discussion at the end of each session provided qualitative input.

The final phase of the project was the post-intervention evaluation, which included quantitative and qualitative procedures. Two post-intervention inventories provided quantitative data. They paralleled the pre-intervention inventories and provided reliable information as to the impact of the intervention when compared to the pre-intervention data.

Semi-structured interviews and focus group interaction comprised the qualitative aspect of the study. Grandparents utilized an online blog. This tool allowed the gathering of information and the cross pollination of ideas while reinforcing the technological aspect of the study. The semi-structured interviews took place as the intervention phase

concluded. Grandparents interviewed their grandchildren through technological connections. The interviews recorded the perspective of the grandchildren and how the interventions impacted them. After the semi-structured interviews, the grandparents came together for a final focus group. During the guided discussion, the grandparents reported and their reactions and the reactions of their grandchildren. I then analyzed the transcripts and tapes to identify, categorize, and evaluate themes.

The study used an explanatory, mixed-methods design. I chose this method of research because the quantitative data gathered initially, helped in establishing a starting point for the research. The review of existing literature did not find any single study adequately addressing the three dynamics of grandparenting, faith formation of grandchildren, and the use of technology. A quantitative examination of the topics established a launching pad to elevate the investigation.

The continuous qualitative feedback through blogs and focus groups gave participants opportunities to provide much-needed perspective and input throughout the intervention. The relational incentive of helping their grandchildren grow in their relationship with God was a powerful motivation for the grandparents to expand their technological horizons, as well as their relationships with their grandchildren. The integration of technology into the relational and formational aspects of the study was an intentional effort to immerse the participants in the process.

Instrumentation

The study employed three sets of researcher-developed protocols and four sets of researcher-developed assessment. The assessment inventories included two researcher-designed pre-intervention instruments. Two researcher-designed, post-intervention

instruments supplied quantitative data. The researcher-designed, pre-intervention instruments were the pre-intervention information technology survey and the pre-intervention assessment tool. The post-intervention instruments were the final information technology survey and the final assessment tool. These instruments mirrored one another so they accurately reflect the impact of the intervention on the participants.

Four protocols gathered qualitative information during and after the intervention. The blog interaction guide (BIG) protocol gave guidance for participants' input into the online journal. The seminar interaction guide (SIG) set the procedures for the focused interactions that took place to conclude each seminar session. The grandchild interview guide provided instruction to the grandparents on the questions and procedures they used when making their grandchildren's final evaluative Skype interview. The final interaction guide outlined the open-ended, follow-up, and probing questions used during the study's final assessment gathering with the grandparents.

The researcher-designed PITS ascertained the technological skill level of the participants' pre-intervention. The twelve Likert-scale responses in the PITS used a six-point scale, ranging from *expert* to *unfamiliar* to gauge the competency of the respondents. Twelve forced-choice questions gathered data about the pre-intervention use of technology by the grandparents to enrich their relationship with their grandchildren. Three short-response questions considered the fluid nature of technological development and allowed the participants to write in technologies and applications that were not included in the Likert scale and forced-choice questions (see Appendix C).

The PAT was researcher designed to gather pre-intervention data about the general demographics, relational situation, and faith-formational commitment of the

participants. The PAT utilized a combination of short-answer and forced-choice questions, along with a six-point Likert scale ranging from *excellent* to *very poor*. The use of one forced-choice and two short-answer questions gathered the demographic data. One forced-choice and five Likert-scale questions ascertained the relational information. All twelve of faith-formational responses used the Likert scale (see Appendix C).

A researcher-designed, final evaluation tool, FITS, gathered quantitative data to gauge the impact of the intervention. It used a six-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. Ten of the questions dealt with the impact of the intervention on attitudes toward and use of technology. Two of the questions addressed the attitudes towards being a faith mentor (see Appendix E).

The FAT was a researcher-designed final evaluation tool that gathered quantitative data to judge the impact of the intervention. It utilized a six-point Likert scale ranging from *improved greatly* to *declined greatly*. Five of the questions addressed the impact of the intervention in the relational areas. Twelve of the questions focused on the faith-formational aspects of the study. One forced-choice question concentrated on relational contact during the study.

The BIG was a researcher-designed protocol for gathering qualitative data during the intervention period. It used simple directives to start and guide the discussion on the study blog. It allowed the participants to comment on all three spheres of the study: relationships, faith formation, and technology. It reinforced the technological aspect of the study, forcing the grandparents to use the blog (see Appendix G).

A researcher-designed protocol, the SIG, collected qualitative data from the participating grandparents after each seminar session. It applied simple open-ended

questions to start, stimulate, and deepen the discussion. It also prepared the grandparents through modeling and experience to be more proficient in using the GIG when they interviewed their grandchildren on Skype (see Appendix G).

The GIG, a researcher-designed protocol, gathered qualitative data from the participating grandchildren. It used simple directives to guide the grandparents as they interviewed their grandchildren on Skype. The use of Skype reinforced the technological sphere of the study (see Appendix G).

The FIG was a researcher-designed protocol with the purpose of gathering qualitative data at the conclusion of the intervention. It used simple directions to start, stimulate, and deepen the discussion. It not only elicited responses about the impact of the intervention in the three spheres of relationship, technology and faith formation but also stimulated thinking about further investigation, development, and applications in these areas (see Appendix G).

Expert Review

Individuals with expertise in the fields of education, human development, parish education, and research methods in education reviewed all instruments and protocols used in the study. I drafted a correspondence which shared with the expert reviewers the study's problem, purpose, and research questions. Each expert reviewer has earned a doctoral degree in his or her respective field. Two men and two women were a part of the review process. Expert reviewers had extensive backgrounds in human development, pastoral ministry, and education. I developed a simple protocol for them to use to respond to each instrument (see Appendix J). The members of my research reflection team, consisting of a pastor with a PhD in Christian education, a medical university dean, a

corporate CEO, a published author, a retired principal, and two grandparents brought additional refinement to each instrument.

Variables

The independent variable in the study was the six-week intervention. I hypothesized that through an intervention strategy incorporating education, motivation, practice, and demonstrated outcomes, grandparents and grandchildren would change their attitudes, actions, and interactions. The intervention included introducing the participants to the list of 40 Developmental Assets to demonstrate the importance of a comprehensive approach to child development and its contribution to formation of a vital and maturing young person. The four faith practices of caring conversation, family tradition, Bible stories, and prayer were also important factors in the six-week intervention.

Three dependent variables were present in the study. These dependent variables were the relationship between the participating grandparents and grandchildren, the faith-mentoring practices of the grandparents on behalf of their grandchildren, and the use of technology in relational and formational interactions between grandparents and grandchildren. I hypothesized that the intervention would produce three interconnected outcomes in the three dependent variables. Those projected outcomes were an enhanced relationship between the grandparents and their grandchildren, an enriched faith experience, and an increased use of technology as a tool of interaction.

The research design minimized intervening variables during the study. The age range for the grandchildren to participate was set at 6-12 years old, which eliminated a wide range of developmental differences. Grandparents also had to live at least twenty miles away from their participating grandchildren. Since the ages of the grandchildren

did not include the driving age, it reduced the number of direct physical interactions that might skew the results. The modeling, instructing, and practice of interview techniques throughout the study lessened the impact of the difference in interactive and recording skills among the grandparents as they reported their interactions with their grandchildren.

The greatest intervening variable was the diversity in technological capability among the grandparents. One method of addressing the difference was through a minimum competency level requirement. The participants needed access to a desktop or laptop computer and able to send and receive e-mail. Remedial instruction was given to those who were unfamiliar with Skype and blogging. A technology tutor was provided for those who needed extra instruction. An additional level of remediation was achieved by matching the techno-savvy grandparents with the techno-novice grandparents to mentor them. The proficiency levels were matched so the technologically skilled individuals did not overwhelm the less accomplished individuals.

Reliability and Validity

The consistency of results measures reliability (Creswell 169). I addressed the important question of reliability in a mixed-methods approach to gather data in several ways. A variety of instrumentation provided a way to cross-check the consistency of data received from multiple sources. The pre- and post-intervention quantitative inventories paralleled each other to provide reliability in determining if the intervention resulted in a change of attitudes, understandings, and behaviors among participants.

The reliability of the quantitative instruments themselves was a vital consideration. The expert reviews addressed the factor of reliability. A group of PhDs with expertise in the fields of education, human development, parish education, and

research methods in education reviewed all surveys and interaction protocols used in the study. Their insights helped to make the instruments more user-friendly and effective as tools for gathering pertinent data.

The concerns that were raised with the surveys to be used by the grandchildren, Pre-Intervention Assessment by Grandchildren (PABG) and Final Assessment by Grandchildren (FABG), were the inclusion of concrete language and the use of icons to connect with the appropriate emotion in the children. On several questions the recommendation was that the word *response* be replaced with *answer* because it was clearer and more concrete in the understanding of the children. Emoticons were used in series and individually to express the intensity of emotion. Icons of a heart, cloud, sun, and check mark were used on other questions to indicate the grandchild's choice of answers.

The grandparent surveys were also revised after the expert review. One recommendation that proved very insightful was the sequencing of questions on the PAT. The four formational disciplines had three questions each. They dealt with the desire, ability, and practice of the disciplines. Originally the questions appeared in the sequence of ability, desire, and practice. The reviewers recommended the order of questions should be changed to desire first, ability second, and practice third. This sequence allowed the stair-step effect to be observed.

The expert input also addressed the need to adjust the Likert scale's spectrum flow. Originally all Likert scale questions on the PAT, PIT, FAT, and FIT ranged from the most positive response to at the low end of the spectrum, 1, and the most negative response at the high end, 6. These response patterns were reversed to have an increasing

numerical value. An example of the final spectrum flow from the PAT is, "Using the 1-6 scale, from *very poor* to *excellent*, please indicate how you would characterize your relationship with your grandchild."

In gathering the qualitative data, I used several methods to ensure reliability. The focus groups built into each seminar expanded the opportunities for input and provided a means to track responses over time for consistency. The use of the online journaling paralleled the focus groups, adding depth and another way to track consistency. This procedure allowed me to identify common themes from the various sources of data gathering.

The use of both qualitative and quantitative techniques supplied a source of comparison between the two pools of data. Cross referencing provided a means of judging the validity, reliability, and consistency of the findings. The themes drawn from the transcripts from the focus group discussions were compared with responses from the FAT and FIT to judge the consistency and cohesiveness of the data.

The intervention seminar schedule added a degree of consistency. The seminar lesson plans utilized the same pattern of four modules of time each session. The sequence was the informational/motivational presentation followed by a segment of class time to assimilate the concepts. The grandparents planned an interaction with the grandchildren utilizing the concepts through technological communication. The participants practiced the planned grandparent/grandchild interaction with a partner in the class. As noted previously, I made a concerted effort to match levels of technological skill to encourage growth. The seminar session ended with a focus group discussion. The repetition of the procedural pattern each week encouraged accountability and consistency because the

participants knew they would have to put their learning into practice in an observable way.

Data Collection

The objective in data collection is to obtain as much material as possible through research procedure. Instead of a broad, shallow sampling of material, the collection of data focused on a narrow, but deeper sampling for analysis. The mixed-methods research incorporated into the study was designed to provide reliable data on the same topic from various information collection processes.

The first level of data collection during the pre-intervention phase utilized several researcher-designed instruments for quantitative measurements. The PAT and PITS revealed four layers of information from the grandparents. First, they gathered the surface demographic information. The next layer of questions dealt with technology. The subsequent strata of inquiry delved into the relational components between grandparents and grandchildren. Finally, the grandparents shared their level of interactive faith-formational practices with their grandchildren.

The pre-intervention data collection also focused on the grandchildren and parents of the grandchildren. The grandchildren completed the PABG. The parents utilized the Pre-Intervention Assessment by Parents (PABP).

The tools used to gather qualitative material during the intervention were focus groups protocols, SIG, online journaling protocols, BIG, guided interaction between grandparents and grandchildren through Skype, GIG, and final focus group discussion, FIG. The use of these instruments produced a mountain of material needing separation, categorization, and analysis.

The post-intervention assessment tools were labeled as final assessment tools to help differentiate them from pre-intervention tools when expressed by initials. Two researcher-developed tools, the FITS and FAT, provided quantitative data to gauge the impact study on the grandparents (see Appendix E). The FIG was the protocol used to gather the qualitative data. The grandchildren completed the FABG at the conclusion of the study. The parents completed the FABP to get their input.

Data Analysis

The goal in the data analysis process is to separate the valuable insights and understandings from the raw of data collected during the intervention. The mixed-methods design of the study produced quantitative and qualitative data. Each had to be analyzed in a different way.

The data gathered from the quantitative instruments, PITS, PAT, FITS, and FAT, paralleled each other. The PITS focused on technological competency and use pre-intervention. The weighted Likert scale questions, 1-14 allowed the responses for each question to be averaged and the mean calculated. The more comfort and competence of the respondent in the use of various forms of technology was indicated by higher scores.

Frequency of use questions formed the next segment of the PITS. Questions 15-26 dealt with the frequency of use of various forms of technology by the grandparents in building and maintaining their relationships with their grandchildren, and questions 27-38 addressed the frequency of use in faith formation. These responses established the baseline of technological use as the study began.

The FITS approached the post-intervention evaluation by using a weighted Likert scale from 1-6. These twelve questions focused on the impact of the seminars and the

likelihood of using technology in the future. The higher the mean score, the more positive the respondent was to using technology for relationship building and formational practices.

The PAT was the pre-intervention indicator and the FAT was the post-intervention indicator focusing on the grandparent grandchild relationship and the faith-formational practices. The weighted Likert scale questions allowed the responses for each question to be averaged and the mean calculated. The mean responses could be charted and used in comparison to the pre-intervention results with the post-intervention results indicating the impact of the intervention on the participants.

The qualitative data was processed in a very different way. The BIG, GIG, SIG, and FIG elicited responses and promoted interactions for observations, records, and analysis. Each of these protocols gauged a specific type of interaction during the intervention period. These protocols were related, but not identical. They took into account the individuals involved, the setting, and type of interaction. Once the data was produced, all of the qualitative information was analyzed.

Qualitative data was gathered in three ways. Each seminar session was videotaped and then reviewed. I kept notes from the focus group and a recording secretary was also present at each session to take notes of the interactions. The three strands of data were then analyzed separately and then comparatively.

An initial review of the video recordings provided an opportunity to take notes and to get the overall flow and feel of the session. Transcribing of the tapes allowed detailed analysis of the interactions. Textual examination and coding enabled the categorization of themes. Comparison between the notes taken by the recording secretary

and my notes provided a level of validity. The categorizing and charting of the cumulative data revealed salient themes. The analyzing of these themes and patterns garnered relevant information.

Ethical Procedures

The use of many ethical measures protected the identity of the participants and their responses. I exercised extreme care due to the participation of minor grandchildren in the study. The reporting of the results respected confidentiality, a primary concern. The use of a coded screen name and password protected the online blog, with only the participants and the researcher having access to the login code. I was the only individual who had access to the master code chart containing the screen names and passwords. Each participant gave informed consent. The parents/legal guardians had to provide consent for minor grandchildren to participate (see Appendix A).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Problem and Purpose

The problem addressed by the study was how grandparents can become an effective part of the faith-formation process of their grandchildren by utilizing technology as a tool to minimize the impact of the physical distance between grandparents and grandchildren. In a mobile society, the reality is that families are spread out. Grandparents frequently can live great distances from their children and grandchildren. This situation limits the interactions between the extended family and the support that is available to parents in the process of child rearing, particularly in the area of transmission of values and faith formation.

One way to utilize the relational resources of the extended family effectively is through the use of technology. The study investigated how the family and the church can build a technology bridge to overcome the difficulties of a dispersed support structure. The purpose of Grandparenting the Next Generation was to examine how four faith-formation practices shared between grandparents and grandchildren through the use of technology over a six-week period impacted the grandchildren in the faith-formation process.

Participants

Lutheran Church by the Lake was an excellent setting for the study. Over 91 percent of the members are retired and live in Savannah Lakes Village. They moved from other parts of the country to retire, so they are geographically removed from their families, particularly their grandchildren.

Participants were recruited through the use of the parish newsletter, Sunday morning verbal announcements, written notices in the bulletin, a ministry message board in the narthex with rotating announcements, and a community e-mail notification site known as *neighborlink*. The recruitment campaign ran for six weeks prior to the beginning of the seminar sessions. Twenty-five grandparents expressed interest in participating in the study as a result of the recruitment process. An information meeting was held prior to the seminar sessions to inform interested individuals fully about what the expectations for participation were and to answer any questions they might have about the process. After the informational meeting, six prospective participants dropped out because they did not meet the criteria of the study. Nineteen grandparent participants remained as the study began. Eight spousal couples made up sixteen of the participants. Two grandmothers and one grandfather participated without their spouses.

One of the challenging aspects of the study was the involvement not only of the grandparents but also the grandchildren and the parents of the grandchildren. Once the grandparents committed to the study, they shared all the necessary material with their grandchildren and the parents of the grandchildren. The information included material explaining the study and a consent form to be signed by the parents allowing the grandchildren to participate. The study began with fifteen participating grandchildren between the ages of six and twelve (see Figure 4.1).

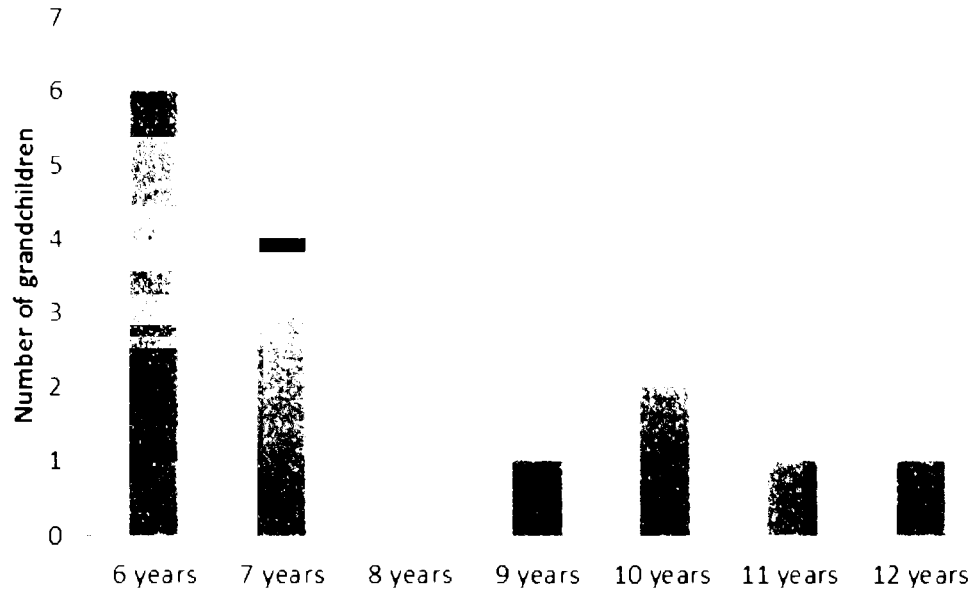


Figure 4.1. Age of participating grandchildren (N=15).

Two grandparent couples had two grandchildren participate. One grandmother had three grandchildren involved in the process. All other participating grandparents only had one grandchild each taking part in the study. The entire sample came from members of Lutheran Church by the Lake even though an effort was made to recruit individuals from the surrounding area by posting information on the community e-mail bulletin board called neighborlink.

The age range for the grandparents was 57-73 (see Figure 4.2). Fourteen of the participants were in the age range from 61-70. Two of the participants were in the 51-60 category, and three were in the 71 and above group. Discussion in the preliminary focus group revealed that all the individuals in the study were in the generation of people who experienced the impact of the technology explosion in the workplace and daily life. All of them remembered the days of the typewriter and the days before the Internet. They all recognized technology as a tool that has had a far-reaching impact on society. They also

acknowledged that the impact can be positive or negative, depending on how the technology is utilized.

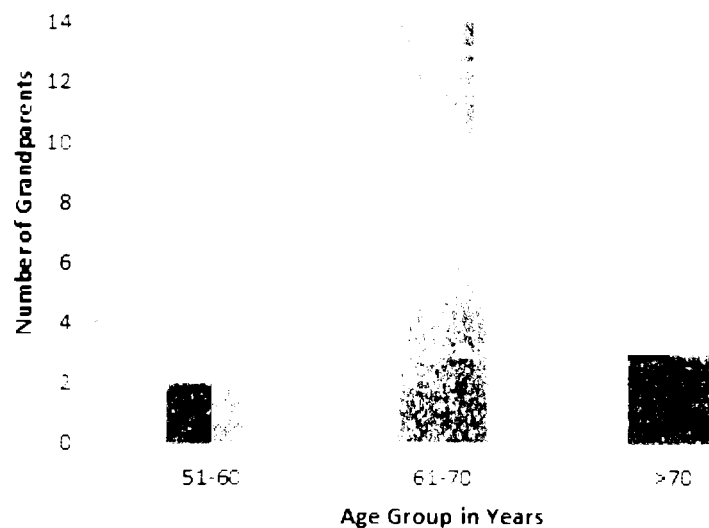


Figure 4.2. Age of participating grandparents (N=19).

The study was made up of six seminar sessions. The first, second, and sixth sessions were two hours in length. The other three sessions were ninety minutes in duration. The additional thirty minutes in the first two sessions were used to focus on the technological aspects of the study. The additional thirty minutes in the final session was used for wrap-up activities, post-intervention surveys, and an extended focus group discussion. Each of the sessions dealt with one of four family faith-formation topics: caring conversations, rituals and traditions, Bible stories, or prayer. Activities were introduced each week on one of the four topics for the grandparents to practice with their grandchild/children through the use of technology.

The attendance at the seminar sessions was varied but steady (see Figure 4.3). The major factors that influenced the attendance of the grandparents at the seminar sessions

were end-of-summer vacations. The major factors impacting the grandchildren's availability was end of summer vacations and back to school commitments. One grandparent couple completed the pre-intervention surveys but did not attend any of the sessions. Five of the participants attended all six seminars. Each session was taped, and the tapes were made available for those who missed.

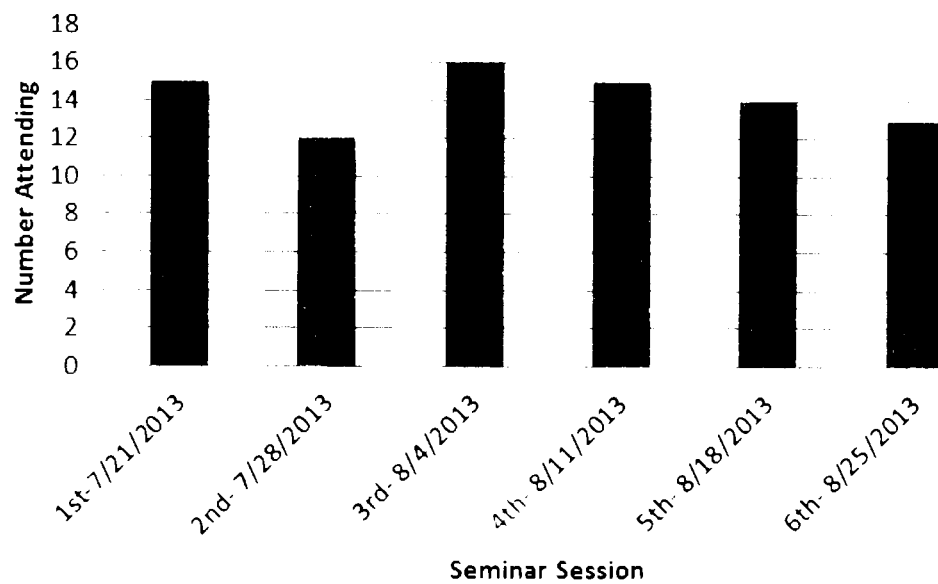


Figure 4.3. Grandparents' attendance at seminar sessions (N=19).

The distances the grandparents lived away from their grandchildren varied greatly among the group of participants. The closest distance was thirty miles. The furthest away was 1,250 miles. The average distance was 317 miles separating the grandparents from their grandchildren. Excluding the outlier of 1,250 miles, the average distance was twenty-five miles. The median was 150 miles. The pool of participants was representative of the target audience.

Another factor involved in the study was the use of technology. Questions 1-14 of the PITS ascertained the self-reported levels of comfort/competence of the participants

using a six-point Likert scale. The raw responses indicated a span of comfort competency ranging from *unfamiliar* to *expert* (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. PITS 1-14, Technology Comfort/Competency (N=19)

Question	Unfamiliar 1	Very Unsure 2	Unsure 3	Confident 4	Very Confident 5	Expert 6	Mean, \bar{x}
1. Desktop	1	0	3	3	9	3	4.47
2. Laptop	0	0	3	5	9	2	4.21
3. Tablet	6	0	3	2	7	1	3.36
4. Smartphone	6	1	3	5	4	0	3.00
5. Cell phone	0	0	0	6	9	4	4.89
6. Gaming system	8	2	3	6	0	0	2.36
7. Other forms							
8. E-mail	0	0	0	3	9	7	5.21
9. Skype	3	1	4	5	4	2	3.10
10. Text	2	3	2	6	4	2	3.68
11. Facebook	5	0	5	6	2	1	3.15
12. FaceTime	6	2	2	4	4	1	3.05
13. Interactive games	10	0	6	0	3	0	2.36

These responses were given corresponding ascending values ranging 1-6. They were then averaged to calculate the mean, \bar{x} . The higher the number, the greater was the comfort/competence of the participants. Analysis of the means produced some anticipated insights into the grandparent's comfort/competency with technology.

The newer the technology the less comfortable/competent the grandparents were with it. This tendency was seen in a comparison of the mean scores for desktop, $\bar{x}=4.47$ and laptop computers, $\bar{x}=4.21$, which are older technology, and with the tablets, $\bar{x}=3.36$, which are more recent technology. The trend was also apparent in the comparison

between cell phones, $\bar{x}=4.89$, older technology, and smartphones, $\bar{x}=3.00$, newer technology.

The tendency can also be seen in the use of technological applications. Comparing the use of e-mail, $\bar{x}=5.21$, which uses desktop and laptops as platforms, to texting, $\bar{x}=3.68$, which uses the smartphone as a platform, reveals a technological time lag. The older technology and applications were more familiar to the grandparents.

One of the key applications for the study was the use of Skype (see Figure 4.4). The charting of the responses of the participants showed a bell curve distribution ranging from *unfamiliar* to *expert*. Since Skype was a crucial element in the study, instruction and remediation were provided for the participants who required extra help mastering its use.

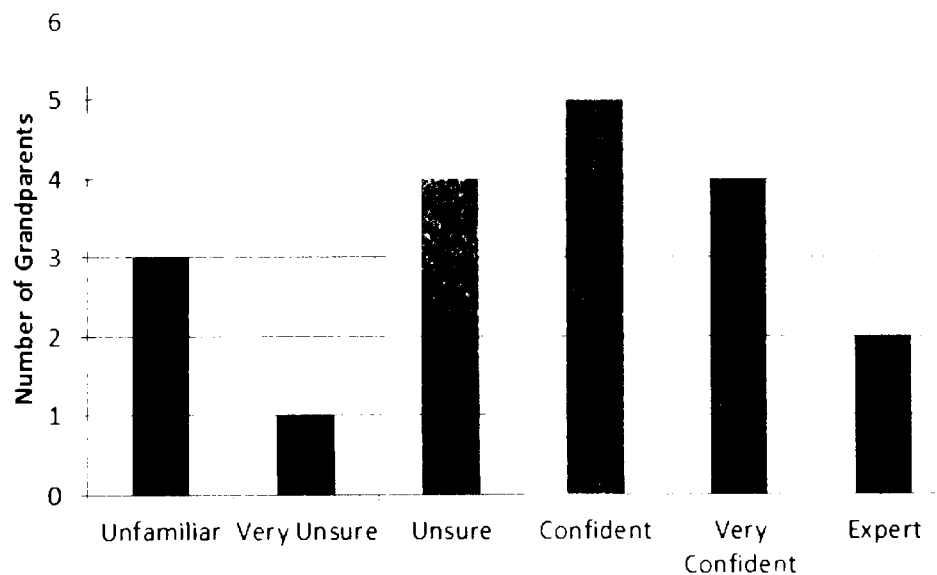


Figure 4.4 Grandparents' comfort/competency using Skype (N=19).

Along with comfort/competency level of the subjects, the frequency of use of various technologies and applications was taken into consideration. Questions 15-26 of the PITS asked the participants to indicate how often they used various common

technologies and applications in their relationship with their grandchildren (see Table 4.2). These responses ranged from daily to never.

Table 4.2. Frequency of Use of Various Technologies with Grandchildren (N=19)

Question	Daily	Weekly	2x Monthly	Monthly	Other	Never
15. E-mail	1	0	0	0	0	18
16. Skype	0	1	4	6	2	6
17. FB	2	2	1	0	0	12
18. Text	1	1	0	0	0	17
19. FaceTime	0	1	1	1	0	16
20. Games	0	2	0	1	1	15
21. Landline	1	4	1	3	7	0
22. Cell	1	5	2	2	5	4
23. Smartphone	1	1	1	1	0	0
24. Computer	1	0	4	1	2	11
25. Tablet	1	0	3	0	2	13

New technologies and applications are developed and introduced to the public at a staggering rate. In the ever-changing landscape of technology, question 39 on the PITS measured the participant's openness and adaptability to technology (see Figure 4.5). It used a six-point Likert scale ranging from *resistant adapter* to *eager-early-adapter*. Age was not a factor in the participants' openness to adopt technology. The oldest participant in the study was an eager-early-adapter and one of the youngest was a hesitant adapter.

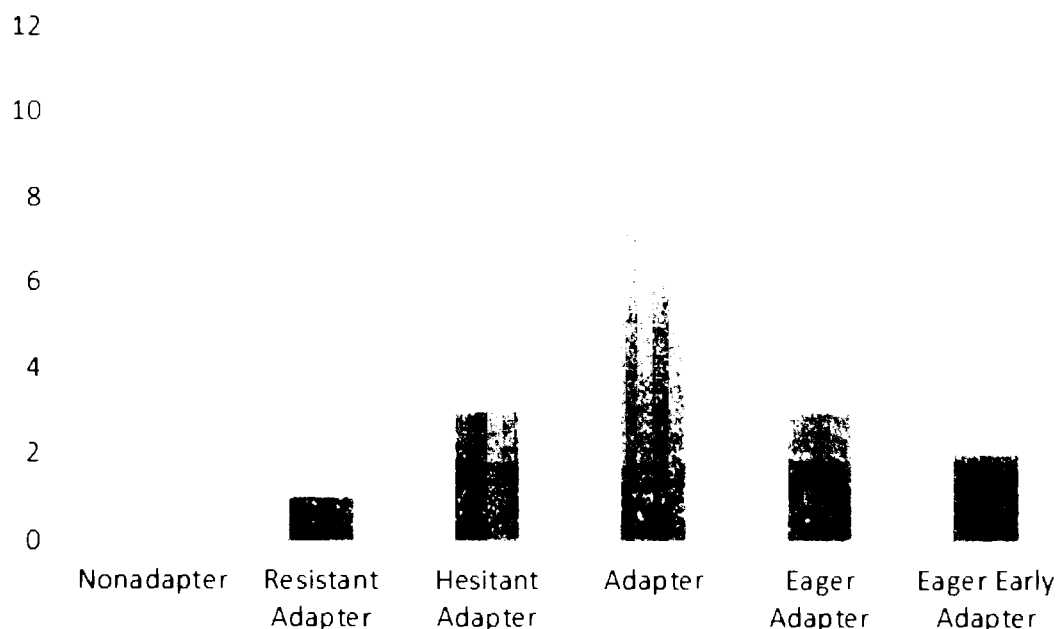


Figure 4.5. PITS Question #39—openness to technology (N=19).

A minimum level of technological competence was required for participation in the study. That level was the ability to use a desktop or laptop computer, competence in video conferencing, and proficiency in using a blog. General instruction was given on each of these aspects of the study during the first session. Individual remedial instruction was given for those who needed it. A technology tutor went to the homes of those receiving the additional coaching. These sessions lasted anywhere from thirty minutes to several hours. Three grandparent couples received the tutoring and achieved the needed level of competence.

Research Question #1

The first research question established the starting point of the grandparents' existing practices in their use of technology when relating to their grandchildren in the area of faith formation. Specific instruments, the PAT and the PITS, were created to answer research question #1: "What were the grandparents' understandings, attitudes, and

uses of faith-formational practices combined with technology prior to the six-week intervention?”

The PAT used an ascending six-point Likert Scale ranging from *very poor* to *excellent* to rate the responses. The questions were grouped into five categories. Questions 1-4 addressed the general relationship and communication between grandparents and grandchildren. The next four groups of questions each had three questions. One group dealt with the desire, one addressed the ability, and one focused on the practice of the grandparents correlating to a specific faith formational skill. The skills were caring conversations, prayer, Bible stories, and traditions (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3. Response to Relational and Faith Practices on PAT (N=19)

Statement	Very Poor 1	Poor 2	Fair 3	Good 4	Very Good 5	Excellent 6	Mean, \bar{x}
Relationship with grandchild	0	0	0	1	12	6	5.26
Relationship with parents	0	0	0	3	11	5	5.10
Communication with grandchild	0	0	3	5	8	3	4.57
Communication with Parents	0	0	3	6	5	4	4.31
Caring conversation—desire	0	0	0	1	5	13	5.68
Caring conversation—ability	0	1	2	4	9	3	4.57
Caring conversation—practice	1	0	3	8	7	0	4.05
Prayer—desire	0	0	1	4	5	9	5.10
Prayer—ability	0	1	3	6	6	3	4.36
Prayer—practice	0	6	3	5	3	2	3.57
Bible stories—desire	0	0	2	4	6	7	4.94
Bible stories—ability	0	2	2	6	6	3	4.31
Bible stories—practice	2	2	6	5	4	0	3.36
Ritual and traditions—desire	0	0	0	2	5	12	5.52
Ritual and traditions—ability	0	0	2	3	11	3	4.78
Ritual and traditions—practice	1	0	4	7	5	2	4.10

The results of the PAT showed a decline from *D*—desire to *A*—ability to the *P*—practice in all four of the faith formational categories (see Figure 4.6). Caring conversations is a relational practice that is foundational for a faith-formational relationship between grandparents and grandchildren. The desire for caring conversations on the part of the grandparents was the highest of all the formational skills, but the ability

and practice, while strong, did not match the desire, $D, \bar{x}=5.68; > A, \bar{x}=5.57; > P, \bar{x}=4.05$ (see Figure 4.6).

This same trend continued with all the other formational interactions. Figure 4.6 shows a stair step effect descending from desire to ability to practice in the areas of prayer, $D, \bar{x}=5.1; > A, \bar{x}=4.36; > P, \bar{x}=3.57$ and traditions, $D, \bar{x}=5.52; > A, \bar{x}=4.78; > P, \bar{x}=4.10$. The weakest area was sharing Bible stories and showed a lower but consistent pattern with the other spiritual development skills, $D, \bar{x}=4.94; > A, \bar{x}=4.31; > P, \bar{x}=3.36$. In the focus group discussions, the grandparents expressed a feeling of inadequacy about scripture. The lower quantitative scores on the Bible stories category are consistent with qualitative statements.

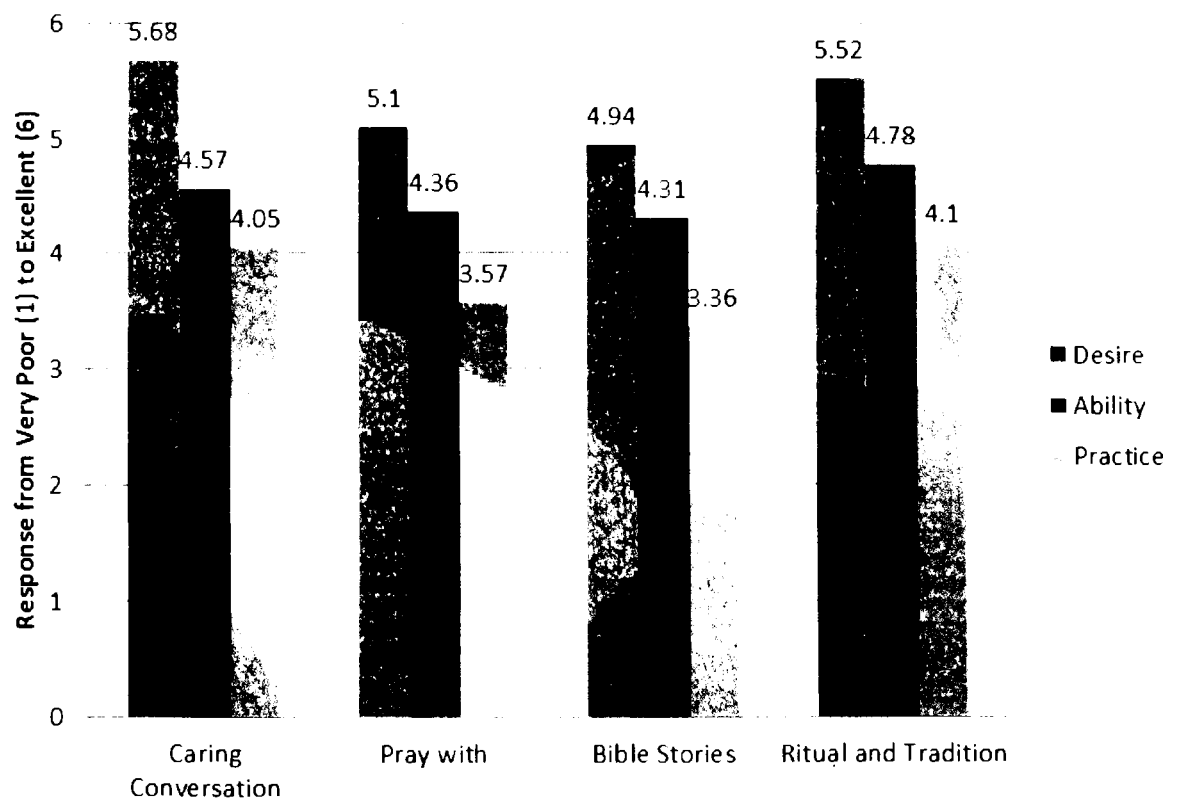


Figure 4.6. Response to faith practices on PAT (N=19).

The downward slope is compatible with the hypothesis that grandparents are willing role models as revealed in the high desire (*D*) ratings. The ability (*A*) and practice (*P*) ratings show a willing pool of grandparents who have room to grow in skills and motivation as faith mentors. An opportunity is present in providing training and resources in the faith-formational areas. The high desire can be interpreted as a motivated group open to learning and incorporating new information and practices.

The genuine opportunity for growth is revealed in the responses to questions 28-38 on the PITS (see Table 4.4). These questions addressed the utilization of technology for faith formation with grandchildren. Across the spectrum of different technologies, the overwhelming response was never. Comparing this data with the responses to question 41 (see Figure 4.5, p. 128) revealed the participants were open to technology but had not yet applied technology to the task of faith formation with their grandchildren.

Table 4.4. Pre-Intervention Information Technology Survey (N=19)

Question	Daily	Weekly	2X Monthly	Monthly	Other	Never
28. E-mail	0	0	0	0	0	19
29. Skype	0	1	2	0	0	16
30. Facebook	0	0	0	0	0	19
31. Text	0	0	0	1	0	18
32. FaceTime	0	1	0	0	0	18
33. Games	0	0	0	0	1	18
34. Landline	0	0	0	0	1	18
35. Cell	0	0	0	1	2	16
36. Smartphone	0	1	0	0	0	18
37. Computer	0	0	0	0	1	18
38. Tablet	0	0	0	0	1	18

Taking all the pre-intervention surveys together reveals a field ripe for the harvest. These instruments showed a pool of grandparents with a high desire to impact the lives of their grandchildren but with a need for training and resources in accomplishing this important task. The surveys displayed the participants were open to technology but were not utilizing technology in the process of being faith mentors for their grandchildren.

Research Question #2

The second research question addressed the impact of the six-week intervention on the participating grandparents: “What changes in the grandparents were observed in their understandings, attitudes, and uses of faith-formational practices combined with technology after the six-week intervention?” Quantitative and qualitative techniques helped gather the data to answer this query.

The questions on the FAT paralleled, but did not replicate identically, the questions on the PAT because the study period was only six weeks in duration. The short period of the intervention made a direct comparison difficult. The FAT used a six-point Likert scale ranging from *declined greatly* to *improved greatly*. The participants were asked to self-assess how the experience impacted the various relational and faith-formational skills practiced during the study. These responses were given weighted values ranging from 1-6. They were then averaged to calculate the mean. The higher the number, the greater was the improvement of the participants (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5. Final Assessment Tool (N=15)

Question	Declined Greatly 1	Declined 2	Declined a Little 3	No Change *3.5	Improved a Little 4	Improved 5	Improved Greatly 6	Mean, \bar{x}
Relationship w grandchild	0	0	0	1	3	9	2	4.83
Relationship w parents	0	0	0	1	7	6	1	4.50
Communication w grandchild	0	0	0	1	3	9	2	4.83
Communication w parents	0	0	0	1	8	6	0	4.37
Caring conversations—desire	0	0	0	0	3	9	3	5.00
Caring conversations—ability	0	0	0	0	5	8	2	4.80
Caring conversations—likely	0	0	0	0	0	12	3	5.20
Prayer—desire	0	0	0	0	4	8	3	4.93
Prayer—ability	0	0	0	0	8	3	4	4.73
Prayer—likely	0	0	0	0	4	8	3	4.93
Bible stories—desire	0	0	0	0	4	7	4	5.00
Bible stories—ability	0	0	0	0	7	6	2	4.67
Bible stories—likely	0	0	0	0	4	7	4	5.00
Traditions—desire	0	0	0	0	4	7	4	5.00
Traditions—ability	0	0	0	0	6	6	3	4.80
Traditions—likely	0	0	0	0	4	8	3	4.93

One participant wrote in *no change* to the questions pertaining to their relationship and communication with their grandchild and the parents of their grandchild. During the focus group discussion, she explained her relationships were already excellent and remained excellent. She further clarified her relationships, saying they were “deepened during the study period.” The *no change* response was given a corresponding 3.5 value weight (*).

All of the responses to FAT were on the positive end of the spectrum of choices ranging from *improved a little* to *improved greatly*, indicating a positive impact of the six-week intervention. The questions about practice of the skills in the PAT (11, 14, 17, and 20) were changed to questions reflecting the likeliness of the practice continuing in

the FAT (7, 10, 13, and 16). This alteration recognized the participants' pattern of practice had been artificially changed during the six-week intervention because of their taking part in the study. The FAT questions about likeliness (7, 10, 13, and 16) revealed the grandparents' self-assessed anticipated change in practice patterns. Put another way, the scores indicated the participants were open and willing to alter their behaviors in the area of using technology as faith mentors.

The strength of commitment to change was gauged in two ways. The first indicator was a side-by-side comparison of the weighted means for the practice questions on the PAT and the likeliness questions on the FAT (see Figure 4.7). If likeliness rankings are an indicator of future practice of grandparents relating to their grandchildren with spiritual development skills, the improvement was significant, $\Delta\bar{x}=1.24$.

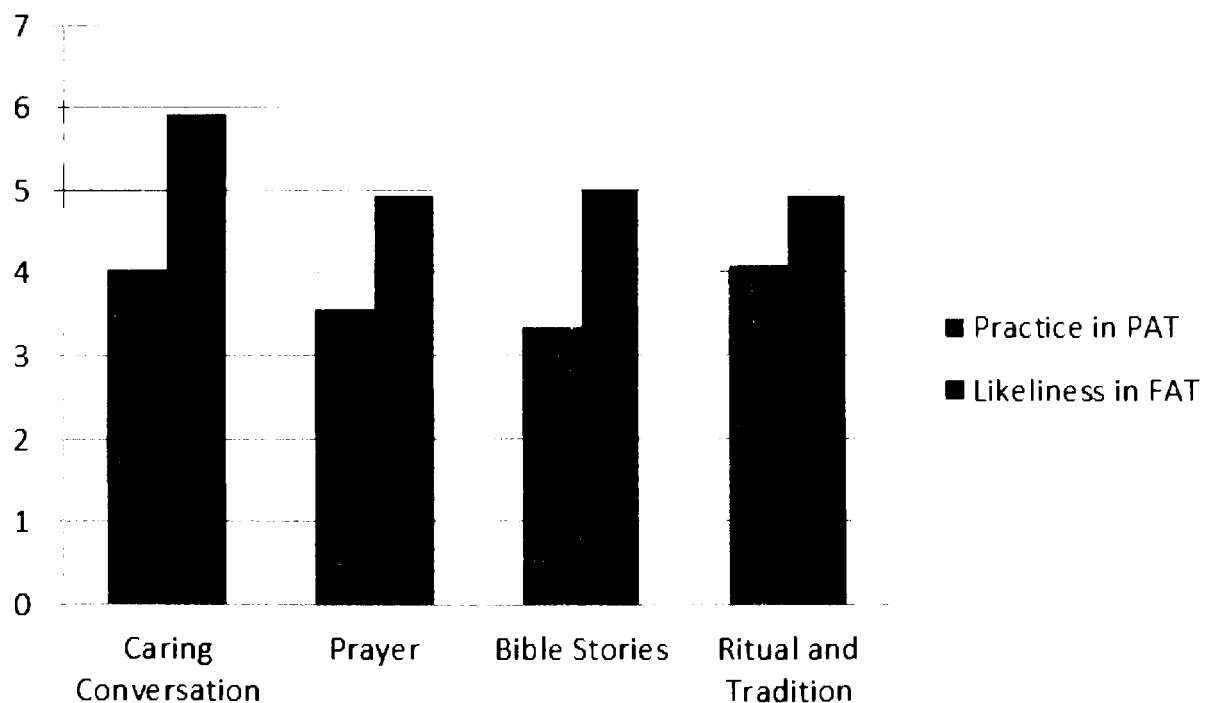


Figure 4.7. Comparing practice in PAT (N=15) with likelihood in FAT (N=9).

The second means of judging the validity of this finding came from qualitative data gathered from the focus group discussion at the close of the study. The participants suggested continuing a monthly follow-up group on grandparenting and faith formation. All the participants present were interested in continuing. The only true indicator of a real change in behavior is what happens in the future.

The FITS was a twelve-question instrument using a weighted six-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (6) to provide quantitative data. Questions 1-10 addressed the practice and attitudes of the grandparents' use of technology during the study period. These questions dealt with their personal interface with the technology, as well as, the technological interaction between the grandparents and the grandchildren. Questions 11-12 focused on the grandparents' self-perception as faith mentors. Question 3 was stated in a negative way to provide an attention index to make sure the respondents had to think about their answers. The results from the FITS were also very positive (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6. Final Information Technology Survey (N=15)

Question	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Somewhat Disagree 3	Somewhat Agree 4	Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6	Mean, \bar{x}
1. More likely to use	0	0	0	5	7	3	4.86
2. Greater knowledge	0	0	0	5	8	2	4.80
3. More frustrated	4	7	2	1	1	0	2.46
4. Grown in ability	0	0	0	5	8	2	5.20
5. Effective tool for faith formation	0	0	1	3	8	3	4.86
6. Meaningful interactions	0	1	0	2	5	7	5.13
7. Vibrant Faith an effective resource	0	0	0	4	10	1	4.80
8. Continued use of Vibrant Faith	0	0	2	3	10	0	4.53
9. Explore new uses	0	0	1	2	5	7	5.06
10. Bridge to enhance connection	0	0	0	1	8	6	5.33
11. See self as faith mentor	0	0	0	2	8	5	5.20
12. Grown in understanding of faith mentor	0	0	0	1	5	9	5.53

Questions 1, 5, and 9 addressed the core thesis of the study: the grandparents' use of technology in the faith-formation process with their grandchildren. These three questions were intentionally redundant, addressing the same topic in different ways. The responses proved consistent with the means (\bar{x}), forming a cluster, Q1: $\bar{x} = 4.86$; Q5: $\bar{x} = 4.86$; Q9: $\bar{x} = 5.06$.

Questions 10, 11, and 12 also overlapped in their focus. They explored the perceptions of the participants in the area of mentoring. The responses were cohesive and resulting means grouped together, Q10: $\bar{x} = 5.33$; Q11: $\bar{x} = 5.20$; Q12: $\bar{x} = 5.53$. The grandparents had a strong sense of the important role they can have in the lives of their grandchildren.

The use of Vibrant Faith was pinpointed with questions 7 and 8. The study used Vibrant Faith online family faith formation Web site extensively as a resource for spiritual development activities and as the platform for the blog. It provided a ready-made resource for exploring the combination of faith, family, and technology. The responses were the weakest recorded on the PITS, Q7: $\bar{x}=4.80$; Q8: $\bar{x}=4.53$, but still in the upper end of the response spectrum.

Question 6 asked directly if the grandparents had a meaningful interaction with their grandchildren through technology during the study period. The results showed a solid level of agreement, Q6: $\bar{x}=5.13$. The nature and depth of the interactions were intentionally explored in the semi-structured focus group.

Along with the quantitative data collected, the qualitative information was processed. The blog proved to be less helpful than first anticipated for analytical purposes. It was more a tool of accountability than viable interaction and data collection. The ineffectiveness of the blog might have been a sign of a generational lag in communication styles and techniques.

The best source of anecdotal information was the focus groups at the end of each session. These guided discussions were fertile soil. One common theme was the sense of pride and excitement expressed by the grandchildren and their parents that the grandparents would venture into the new world of technology.

Stories flowed freely as the interactions between grandparents and their grandchildren were recounted. Pictures were shared over the Internet but also mailed and posted on the refrigerator. One surprising experience was the rebirth of the written letter.

While the technological connection fueled the relationship, the written letters were a source of depth.

Another significant insight came about when discussing the relational faith practice of *caring conversations*. One participant asked, “What is the difference between talking on the phone and using Skype?” The overwhelming response was the visual clues enabled those talking to respond more appropriately. The visual stimulus helped to hold the grandchildren’s attention, since they are concrete learners at ages 6-12. A common realization for the participants was that caring conversations were the life blood of the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren and a strong relationship was the foundation of faith formation.

When the topic of *rituals and traditions* surfaced, several ideas were emphasized. First was the response to the wooden table crosses that had been made by a member of Lutheran Church by the Lake. These small, twelve-inch crosses were provided for each member of the study group, both grandparents and grandchildren. The presence of the cross was a ritualistic reminder of the presence of Christ. “It had a remarkable influence on the tone and tenor of the conversation,” one grandparent said. Recognizing the impact of the cross also reinforced the importance of having visual clues through the use of Skype.

One member of the group shared a ritual she has with her grandchildren using an Internet editing service named *Smilebox*. After each visit or in preparation for a special event, such as a birthday or holiday, she puts together a PowerPoint slide show. The show is sequenced to music to capture what has taken place or to whet the appetite for what is to come. She gave a demonstration of what she has done in the past. She said, “My

grandchildren now ask to see the shows from past years and events. We watch, laugh, and remember.” Many asked questions, took notes, and shared other options for using technology to capture the moment. “A mosaic of memories.” was how one grandmother labeled the process. Another described it as a “modern 8mm movie that is easily shared without the price of postage and developing.” The grandparents showed great energy and interest about the possibilities available to them.

The use of Skype for *Bible stories* was a topic of one seminar session. The focus group the following week unearthed a variety of responses. One factor was the age range of the participating grandchildren. For some simply reading the story and talking about it was not engaging enough. One grandmother, noticing her ten-year-old grandson giving rote responses, asked, “This is getting too much like school isn’t it?” To which he replied, “Yes, Nana.” Nana refocused the conversation and regained the attention of her grandson.

Another grandparent couple had the opposite experience. Their six-year-old grandson proudly drew pictures of the Bible story as he listened and explained them to his ecstatic McMaw and Pap. The grandparents said, “His part of our inheritance could go for his seminary education.” The picture now hangs in a place of honor on their refrigerator.

The final faith formation practice addressed was *prayer*. A variety of approaches were presented. They spanned from the Lord’s Prayer, memorized meal blessings, bedtime prayers, spontaneous prayers of praise or thanksgiving, and the use of a prayer cube. After a grandfather asked what his grandson had silently prayed about the grandson

replied, “That’s between me and God.” The most common use of prayer between the grandparents and grandchildren was bedtime prayer.

Vibrant Faith @ Home was the key technological linkage used throughout the seminar sessions. The grandparents received weekly activities from the Web site that corresponded to the topic for that week (see Appendix I). Weeks one and two addressed caring conversations and the activities were *Gifts from God Inventory* and *God in the Clouds*. The third session dealt with ritual and traditions and the downloads were *Everybody Needs a Rock* and *House Fire*. Bible stories were the focus for our fourth gathering and *Be Not Afraid* and *Starting Something New* reflected on appropriate Scripture texts. The timing of the session coincided with the starting of school for many of the grandchildren, so the activities were chosen to correspond to this strategic event in the lives of the grandchildren. The final two weeks incorporated the practice of prayer. *Hand Prayers* and *Faith Stories: Pray without Ceasing* were two resources recommended for those weeks.

The qualitative interactions about Vibrant Faith were helpful. The Web site was described as “cumbersome” by one participant. Another expressed, “confusion in navigating from activity to activity.” Some of the grandparents who were more technologically adept helped simplify the steps to access the activities.

Others were more positive and voiced “appreciation for the variety of activities.” A number of individuals said they would utilize it in the future and recommend it to others. The opportunities and possibilities of growth in the area of family faith formation and technology were a prevalent theme in the conversation during the focus groups. Two

weeks after the seminar sessions concluded, a grandparent came up to me at church and told me of additional activities he had found and was doing with his granddaughter.

The *Faith Talk with Children* cards (Hardel and Stehlin) were one resource from *Vibrant Faith* that stood out among the rest. These cards fueled the caring conversations between grandparents and grandchildren. They were divided into four categories: *actions and feelings*, *growing together*, *memories*, and *wondering*. A spinner was used to select the category randomly, or an individual could choose it. The grandparents reported they soon learned to stack the deck with age appropriate questions and removed the ones the children struggled answering. This activity was easily adapted to a technological connection using Skype.

Some of the most encouraging feedback has come from unsolicited anecdotal stories from participants following the conclusion of the study. A grandfather, with eyes glistening with joyful tears, told me of selecting several activities on *Vibrant Faith* to use with his granddaughter when they have their weekly Skype session. Before the study he rated their communication as *fair*.

The picture that stays in my mind is of my home visit with one of the participating grandparents several weeks after the study. The usually dour gentleman has a picture of an eagle given to him by his grandchildren on the door leading into his woodshop. The eagle has a far-away look with a strong and stern expression on its face. The caption on the poster says, "I am smiling." The reason for my visit was a pastoral one. He had just returned home from the hospital with two legs in casts as a result of a fall.

When I entered the room he was perched in his overstuffed recliner with both legs propped up. He had the strong and stern express of the eagle on the poster on his face.

When the topic of conversation got around to the grandparent study, the corners of his mouth that had mimicked the downward hook of the eagle's beak began to level out and then took a distinct upward turn. With a slight smile on his face, he said. "Thank you, pastor, for enabling us to do what we should have been doing all along, but didn't know where to start. Our grandchildren are very important to us." The eagle had captured the thoughts and feelings of many participants in the study.

Research Question #3

The third research question asked, "How did the six-week intervention impact the faith and relational perceptions of the grandchildren?" Exploring this question presented several layers of challenge. Foremost was the unique nature of working with children. Gathering pertinent information from children ranging from 6-12 years-old was a major consideration. Acquiring reliable data from a distance and not in a face-to-face manner was taxing. Navigating these of hurdles proved a test of imagination, practical concerns, and the very core thesis of the study—how the tool of technology help bridge the gaps created by physical and relational distance.

The PABG was a researcher-created instrument developed to gauge what the relational and faith-formational factors were before the intervention. It used icons as indicators to assist in spanning the different developmental levels. Smiley faces, hearts, suns, clouds, and check marks, along with simple expressive words helped prompt the children's responses. The parents were encouraged to assist the children when needed without influencing their responses.

The first two questions of the PABG focused on the relational factors (see Figure 4.8). The first question asked the grandchildren to select three or four people who they thought loved them the most. Fifteen out of fifteen grandchildren identified their parents and grandparents. The second question asked with whom they most like to be. Parents and friends rated fifteen out of fifteen, while the grandparents were listed third with twelve out of fifteen. All other possible influential individuals were significantly lower.

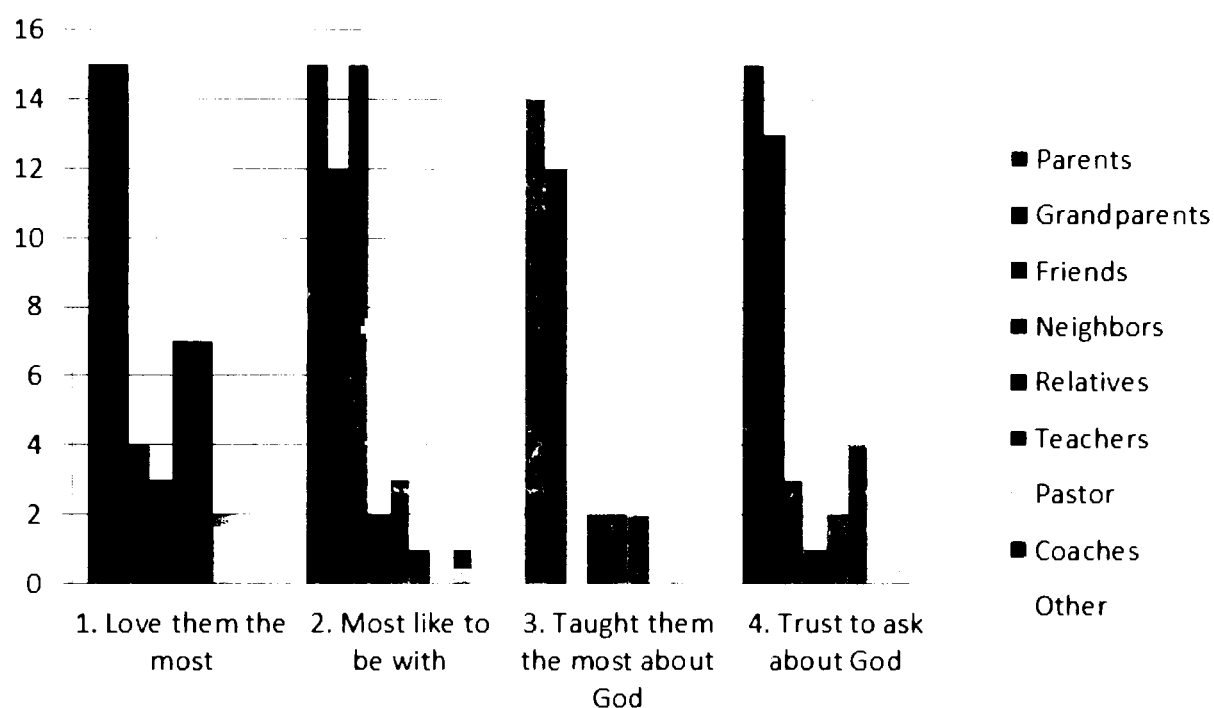


Figure 4.8. Relational and faith-formational influences on grandchildren (N=15).

Questions 3 and 4 sought to learn the faith-formational impact of various significant individuals in the children's lives (see Figure 4.8). Parents and pastors were the greatest influences, but grandparents displayed a significant impact. All other sources of faith influence were far below these three sources of guidance.

Questions 5 and 6 focused on the children's attitudes toward the grandchild/grandparent relationship (see Figure 4.9). They asked the grandchildren to respond on a six-point Likert scale between *very sad* (three frowny faces) and *very happy* (three smiley faces). The responses to question 5 show a strong, positive emotional reaction on the part of the grandchildren when they know their grandparents are calling. Question 6 reveals that grandchildren think their grandparents have an even more positive reaction when they know their grandchildren are available for interaction. Both these responses reveal grandchildren have a very positive attitude toward the grandchild/grandparent relationship.



Figure 4.9. Grandchild/grandparent relationship (N-15).

Questions 7 and 8 sought to gain a sense of the quality of the grandchildren's relationship with their grandparents. Both questions targeted an aspect of good relational communication. The responses indicated the grandchildren had a strong sense of trust and high quality of communication with their grandparents (see Figure 4.10).

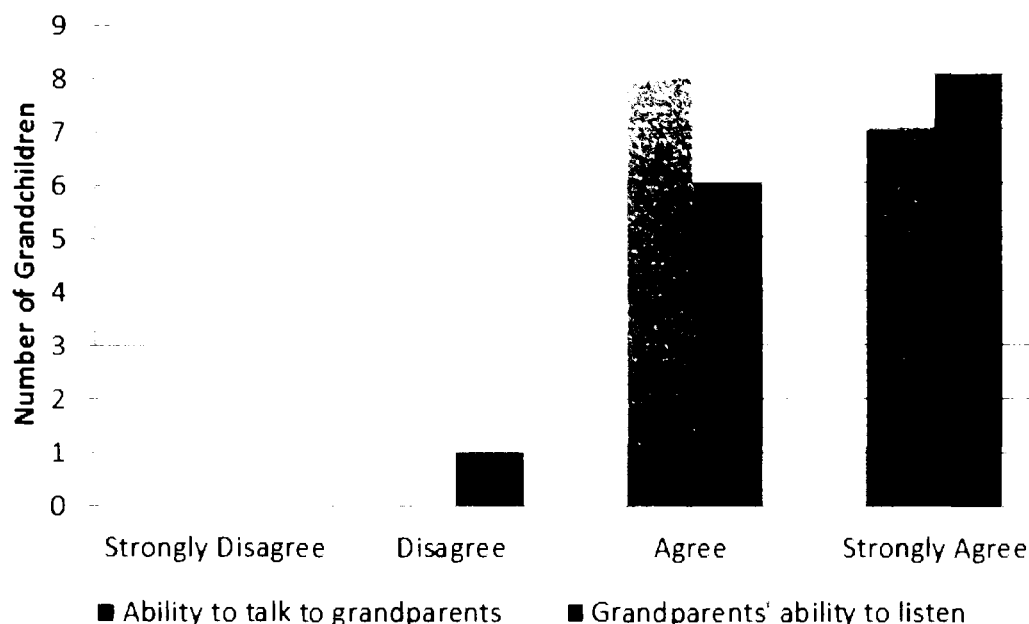


Figure 4.10. Quality of grandchild/grandparent communication (N=15).

Looking at the data from the PABG cohesively reveals that grandparents involved in the study had a very significant place in the lives of their grandchildren. The influence of the grandparents in the realms of personal development, relational nurturing, and faith mentoring were obvious. These findings gave a picture of a positive relationship between the grandchildren and their grandparents.

The FABG was a researcher-developed tool designed to gauge the impact of the intervention on the grandchildren's faith development and relationship with their grandparents by comparing its responses to the PABG. This comparison proved to be difficult because of the much lower rate of return of the FABG. The PABG had all fifteen participating grandchildren return the survey, while only nine of the fifteen returned the FABG. A contributing factor affecting the rate of return on the FABG was that the one grandparent who had three grandchildren participating in the study did not return the

surveys, so a direct comparison was impossible. The raw numbers were converted to the percentage of the respondents to enable a comparison (see Figure 4.11).

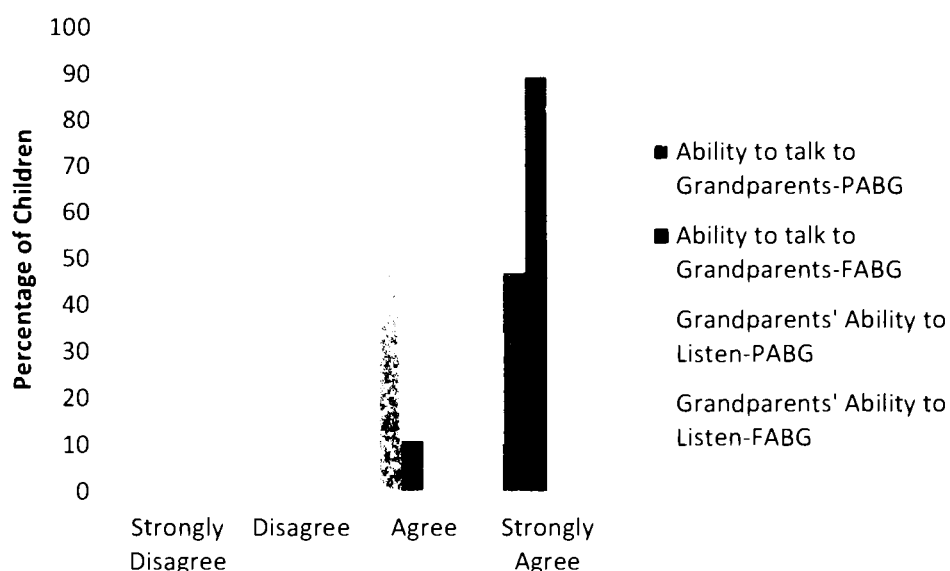


Figure 4.11. Quality of grandparent/grandchild communication percentage comparison between PABG (N=15) and FABG (N=9).

The more revealing way of gauging the impact of the study came from the short, qualitative answers on question 6. The responses from the grandchildren when asked, “What would you like to tell your grandparents about talking on the computer?” clustered in two major themes (see Table 4.7). The first was the joy and pleasure of the interactions and the second was the desire to do it more often. One granddaughter captured both these sentiments when she said, “I love skypeing with Nana and I hope to see her on the Skype board again soon.” The use of Skype proved to be an effective tool.

Table 4.7. Grandchildren's Response to Question 6 on FABG (N=9)

Grandchild (GC)	Joy/Concern	Frequency
GC #1	Please don't stop.	Please don't stop.
GC #2	Great way to talk when I don't get to see them.	
GC #3	I'd rather have them at the house.	
GC #4	It is fun.	I love talking to them.
GC #5		I wish we could do it more often.
GC #6	I like seeing you.	Don't stop.
GC #7	I love Skyping with Nana.	
GC #8	I don't like it. They ask too many questions.	
GC #9	Thank you for learning how to Skype.	We can talk and see each of them more.

One young man's response reflected a negative reaction to the structured format when he said, "I didn't like it because I had to answer too many questions." Another was honest in expressing his preference for face-to-face interaction by saying, "I'd rather have them at our house." Both of these comments reflect the candor of the young participants.

Once again an unsolicited story provided a window to see the impact of the study. One Sunday following worship, a grinning grandmother told me that her granddaughter had snuck off with her father's iPhone to talk to her Nana on FaceTime. This incident was repeated in a two-week period after the study ended, not once, not twice, but three times. The young lady is six years old, knows how to work an iPhone, and wants to talk to her Nana.

One important aspect of the grandparent/grandchild relationship was recognized by the structure of the study, but was not addressed directly by the research questions. The dynamic was the family relational continuum from grandparent to parent of the

grandchild to the grandchild. Grandparents not only relate to their grandchildren directly but also to and through the parents of their grandchildren. The PABP and the FABP explored this important dimension of the relationship through short-response questions.

The PABP had two questions. The first asked, “What ways could the grandparents of your children be most helpful to you in the process of parents?” Three prevalent responses were in the areas of support, encouragement, and trust (see Table 4.8). A mother captured all three areas when she wrote, “By supporting our parenting decisions and providing encouragement, by helping, but not leading in the parenting process.” A second tier of comments clustered around quality time and good communication.

Table 4.8. Response Themes from Question 1 on PABP (N=11)

Parent	Support	Encouragement	Trust
P #1	Be consistent. Set clear boundaries Provide times of respite.		Don't keep tabs on the number of times I ask for help.
P #2	Wisdom in parenting practices. Sitter for extended absences	Demonstrate love and patience.	
P #3	Spend time rather than money. Show patience.	Show appreciation for me as a mother. Show patience.	Trust me to make right decisions.
P #4	Be supportive of our parenting decisions. Respond honestly/lovingly when we ask for advice.	Love, listen. Get to know grandchildren as individuals.	I learned from them. They made mistakes. I'll make mistakes, but we will make it.
P #5	Watch, talk, read to children.	Be good listeners/ sounding boards.	
P #6	Involved, but not overwhelming	Be there for special times and difficult times. Parent relationship that is loving and supportive.	
P #7	Support parenting decisions. Spending time/special	Provide encouragement.	Helping, not leading, with parenting process.

	activities.		
P #8	Model discipline.	Loving.	I trust them; they trust us.
P #9		Being upbeat and positive.	Understand when we are busy.
P #10	Support me as parent. Keep communication open.	Loving grandchildren by making them feel important. Don't compare.	
P #11	Being there not only physically, but emotionally. Support by caring and listening.		Have faith in me. They were good parents to me, that is where I learned to parent.

A special concern of the single parents was verbalized appropriately: "As a single parent, it is also helpful to have the grandparents provide times of respite for me so I can get some rest and step away from the intensity of being the sole provider for two very young children." The composition of the modern family has many variations. The specific household configuration can have a significant impact on the needs and dynamics of those involved.

The second question of the PABP focused on the role grandparents can play in the faith-formation process. It asked, "What ways could grandparents be most helpful in the faith development of your children?" Three overriding themes stood out (see table 4.9). The first was the importance of grandparents as role models of faith and examples of Christian integrity.

Table 4.9. Response Themes from Question 2 on PABP (N=11)

Parents	Christian Integrity	Prayer	Nurture
P #1	Live lives as Christians, set example.		They need to be open to answering questions and listen with open heart and mind.
P #2	Reinforce moral/ethical behavior and beliefs by		Demonstrate love. Pass along stories.

	personal testimony.		
P #3	Live their own lives by the will of God and as role models.	Pray daily.	Give thanks for GC and be gracious.
P #4	Be genuine in faith. Set an example.	Pray for us as a family.	Don't feel you are the only ones contributing, be an important part of the team.
P #5	Be a good role model.	Pray at meal time and bed time.	Share Bible stories. Provide a safe environment. Answer questions.
P #6	Don't preach, show them by being real followers of Christ every day.	Pray.	Let GC know the love of God through them. Bible stories. Camp Grand.
P #7	Be open and talkative regarding their faith.		Encourage faith and help with spiritual growth.
P #8	Include the GC in their faith practices.		Have open channels of communication about faith.
P #9		Pray together when things are good or bad.	Tell age appropriate stories about faith experience.
P #10	Be a good role model, live faith and share when appropriate.		Don't be pushy, ask me as a parent what I want to teach my children.
P #11	Not only talk to kids about God, show them by example.	Having prayers in the home.	Give appropriate books, videos, and CDs.

A mother explained the desired support: "Continue to live their lives by the will of God and as role models. Be people my daughter can respect." The importance of grandparents being a positive examples appeared in each of the surveys.

The importance of prayer was also very prominent. Two aspects of prayer were emphasized by the parents. One was grandparents praying for their grandchildren. The second was grandparents praying with their grandchildren and setting an example of faithfulness.

A number of various responses could be grouped under the heading of nurture. A father wrote, “Don’t preach, but encourage by listening and answering questions.” A mother captured a similar sentiment with this insight: “by being open and talkative regarding faith, by encouraging our children in their own faith and supporting spiritual growth.” These comments could be described as providing a relational sanctuary and safe haven for grandchildren to experience and grow in their relationship with God.

The Final Assessment by Parents allowed the parents of the grandchildren to share their observations of what happened during the six-week intervention. The most common comment was recognizing technology as a tool to supplement and enhance the relationship. The second was that the intervention intentionally encouraged grandparents to initiate meaningful interactions with their grandchildren and was a catalyst for them to do something they enjoyed but might not do otherwise. The negative corollary to the intentionality was that too much structure stifled natural spontaneity and vibrancy of the interaction.

Summary of Major Findings

Grandparents and grandchildren are a symbiotic blessing for each other. They provide mutual joy, purpose, love, opportunity, and fulfillment between generations. The following three sentences by a mother of one of the grandchildren support the findings of *Grandparenting the Next Generation: Fanning the Flame of Faith*:

My parents and my child are very close. She completely trusts and respects them and constantly wants to play and spend time with them. She especially loves when the three of them are together playing games, listening to her read, learning from them as role models, and just talking about anything.

In a world of scattered families, technology can be a useful tool to strengthen the precious relationship among grandparents, their grandchildren, and their living Lord.

The study revealed three distinct findings.

1. The strong mutual affinity in the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is a powerful influence in grandchildren's lives. Both quantitative measures and qualitative reports supported what many individuals have observed or experienced; the bond between most grandparents and grandchildren is a reciprocal blessing. During the study grandchildren rated their grandparents second only to their parents among those who love them the most.

2. Communication is the soil from which relationships grow. The sharing between grandparents and grandchildren can be a fertile environment for cultivating healthy faith development. The intentional nurturing of caring conversations also contributes to a deepening of the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren.

3. Technology is an effective tool for communicating, nurturing relationships, and forming faith but not yet fully utilized in the grandparent/grandchild relationship. The variety of technologies and the various uses of these technologies provides opportunities to build and enhance the relationship between grandparents, grandchildren, and God in new and creative ways.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Major Findings

One of the challenges facing the church in today's modern, mobile society is the dispersion of the extended family until it has become the overextended family, stretched to the breaking point. This situation limits the interactions between the multigenerational family and the support that is available to parents in the process of child rearing, particularly in the area of transmission of values and faith formation. Grandparenting the Next Generation: Fanning the Flame of Faith explored how grandparents can become an effective part of the faith-formation process of their grandchildren by utilizing technology as a tool to minimize the impact of the physical distance between grandparents and grandchildren.

The findings from the study were not surprising. The hypothesis was strongly supported. The key to applying the results to a ministry setting is combining three clearly apparent phenomena into a functioning, faith-formation process.

Strong Mutual Affinity between Grandparents and Grandchildren

My personal observations of twenty years in ministry were reinforced in the strongest way the day my first grandchild was born. In the eyes of his grandfather he was the most beautiful baby ever born, just like every baby ever born. The ensuing twelve years of being a grandparent and watching other grandparents has only reinforced my perception of the special bond that exists between grandparents and grandchildren.

These observations were strongly supported by the quantitative and qualitative data collected during the six-week intervention. In the quantitative surveys, grandchildren

identified their grandparents second only to their parents as individuals who love them most. The cumulative mean of the nineteen participating grandparents rated their relationship with their grandchildren at 5.26 on a scale of 1-6.

The qualitative accounts told of grandchildren who enjoyed being and doing things with their grandparents seemingly regardless of the activity. One ten-year-old boy invited his friends to his Nana and Pop-Pop's house on the lake for his birthday party because it was fun to be with them. Of course the grandparents dropped what they were doing to have the party. Grandparents, gathered in focus groups, regaled each other with tales of their precious, precocious grandchildren. At the end of the study period, the grandparents wanted to continue meeting once a month to share ideas about and experiences with grandparenting.

Developmental theory helps to explain the synergy in the grandparent/grandchild relationship. Piaget says children 6-12 years old are in the concrete stage of development. They are becoming aware of those around them and learning from what or who is physically present. Modeling is important for learning at this stage (McLeod). Grandparents have been rightly described as role models and *natural mentors*.

At the same time grandchildren are in the concrete stage, grandparents are in the generativity versus stagnation period of life described by Erikson. Between the ages of 40 and 65, individuals are striving to create something that will last beyond themselves (267). Grandparents cannot find a better way to address the issues of generativity successfully than helping shape the hearts and lives of grandchildren before the concrete of character is set and hardened in life patterns.

Vygotsky emphasizes the role of culture and social influence in the “zone of proximal development.” He might as well be describing the extended family. The extended family is where values, mores, and beliefs from the milieu of the family and society seep into the porous and absorbent psyche and spirit of the preadolescent child. The child is continually submerged in the value, mores, and beliefs until he or she is infused with the content present in his or her context, culture, and clan to the point of saturation.

Westerhoff uses the image of tree rings in the process of faith development, or maybe a better phrase would be faith infusion. He says instead of a stagnant saturation point, faith continues to flow throughout life. The sap of spiritual vitality moves from *experienced* to *affiliated* to *searching* and on to *owned* faith. The years of 6-12 are vital as *affiliated* and *searching* faith seek to identify with that which is genuine (Westerhoff, Will Our Children Have Faith 89-93). Building on Fowler’s tree-ring theme of faith formation, a child is like a piece of wood submerged in a swamp which becomes petrified over time when minerals penetrate. At each stage of faith formation the child is infused with the content present in their context, culture, and clan. During that time faith can flow from one generation to the next.

This flowing faith is what the Apostle Paul recognizes has happened in the life of his young protégé, Timothy. Faith not only flows but cascades from generation to generation.

As Israel prepared to move from the wilderness into the Promised Land, Deuteronomy 6:6-7 describes the faith transmission process for God’s people. The faith of Israel is deeply rooted. It is etched in the lines around the mouths and eyes of the

elderly as they look upon the next generation and speak of the mighty acts of God on their behalf.

The strong mutual affinity between grandchildren and grandparents has some deep implications for ministry and Christian life. Grandparents need to recognize the important role they can play in the lives of their grandchildren. The church needs to support grandparents by providing training, support, and resources to help them fulfill their vital role.

Support for the training of grandparents in the role of faith mentors can be accomplished through the expansion of intergenerational and multigenerational opportunities. The development of faith and the shaping of character for young people do not need to be a time of wandering in the wilderness. Grandparents can walk with them as loving and encouraging guides through the milestones of life. Those who have traveled the road can help direct those who are walking it for the first time. Grandparents can be an integral part of significant life events like baptisms, the confirmation process, and explaining God's good gift of sexuality.

Grandparents can provide more than a cute card with cold hard cash at the transformative life events of their grandchildren. They can provide clear counsel, valuable insight, and much-needed support through listening to and unconditionally loving their grandchildren. The next generation of grandparenting is based on positive communication within a loving relationship shared through a common story.

Communication and Relationships

The telling of a story is the combining of communication and relationship. It is the weaving together of ideas and individuals, of voices and vision. I first witnessed this

truth in action on family vacations in the 1960s while riding in our Country Squire station wagon with my mom, dad, brother, and two sisters. My dad would tell stories of our family heritage. He started with his childhood, wandering the hills of West Virginia, went through his college days, continued with courting my mom, included his experiences in the ministry and the military, and much, much more. I can remember feeling like a part of the story, connected to my dad, and linked to life. That time period in my life is when I first observed that communication is the soil from which relationships grow.

The findings that were gathered during the six-week intervention supported my experience in the station wagon. The vast majority of focus group discussion time, no matter which of the four faith-formational skills was the topic for the week, centered around *caring conversations*. The conversations were the fuel that fired the relationships.

The one resource that generated the most positive feedback was *FaithTalk with Children*. The reaction of the participants and their grandchildren to many of the activities off the *Vibrant Faith@Home* Web site was much like turning in homework at school after completing the assignment. The response to the *FaithTalk with Children* cards generated animated stories. Many of the grandparents reported they used the cards during every session because of the positive interaction they generated.

At the final focus group one comment captured the impact of the intervention on the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren. The intervention process had deepened the relationship. The comment's meaning is not overtly apparent but can be explained. The pool of common experience had expanded during the intervention because the grandparents and grandchildren had spent time together. The technological

connection made possible what physical distance had prohibited, the deepening of their pool of common experience and the enhancing of their shared story.

These qualitative accounts were supported by the quantitative data presented in Figure 4.11 (p. 147), comparing responses on the pre- and post-intervention surveys concerning communication between grandparents and grandchildren from the grandchildren's perspective. These changes on GPS questions 7 and 8 and identical FEBG questions 3 and 4, while not drastic, did give a positive indication of the impact the invention had on the communication between the grandchildren and their grandparents. These outcomes were consistent with the data collected from the FIG surveys taken by the grandparents. These scores make a more powerful statement when considering the responses on the initial assessment tool, the PAT. Even with a high starting point, in the final surveys grandparents reported their relationship had improved.

Another supporting outcome was that the highest scores on the FIG came in the area of *caring conversations*. One grandparent of a six-year-old was concerned at the beginning of the study because I expected the interactions between grandparents and grandchildren to last for a minimum of fifteen minutes. The grandparent did not think the grandchild would be able to focus for more than five minutes. As the study concluded, the grandparent reported that many times their conversations were over forty-five minutes in length. The communication through *caring conversations* kept the focus of the grandchild and left him with the desire to share again.

The length of time in dialogue was not the only indicator of the positive interaction between the generations. The variety and substance of topics was also revealing. The ability to move from facts to feelings suggested a new level of interaction.

Several grandparents gave examples from discussions they had with their grandchildren about going back to school. The conversation moved from the name of the teacher and description of classrooms, to expressing a variety of feelings, such as excitement, anticipation, joy, uncertainty, and fear.

These findings correspond with the mountain of data which the Search Institute has been accumulating over the past twenty years. SI researchers have found 40 Developmental Assets that young people need to thrive (Search Institute, *Developmental Assets*). A number of these assets cluster in the area of communication and relationships. They are *family support, positive family communication, other adult relationships, adult role models, caring neighborhood, positive peer influence, and religious community* (see Appendix B).

These assets work together through communication and relationships so young people can begin to understand who they are and find their place in the story of life. The Scriptures tell us the story of the people of God. The communication that follows the *shema* (Deut. 6) is a clear declaration of a unique relationship with God that identifies the meaning of being a person in the special community of the people of God.

The verses that follow (Deut. 6:6-7) emphasize the importance of passing on a sense of identity. For Israel the process of knowing who they were came from knowing whose they were: God's. They passed their awareness of whose they were from generation to generation in conversations that were woven into relationships that made up daily life.

The church needs to take seriously the biblical model, not only of faith formation but of identity formation. The literature, the scriptural witness, and this study all steer

God's people in the same direction. The praxis of spiritual development needs to move from being a departmentalized ministry of the institutional church and to an integrated part of family life supported by the church.

Technology as an Effective yet Under-Utilized Tool

The advent and advancement of technology provides an opportunity for the locus of faith formation to return to the home. The accessibility and flexibility of today's technology allows information and communication to be transferred and manipulated in new ways every day. The use of technology to build and maintain viable relationships between grandparents and grandchildren and use those relationships as conduits for faith formation was the premise of the study.

The preconceived idea that grandparents are adverse to technology was not supported in the process of the study. Figure 4.5 (p. 128) reveals a classic bell-curve response when the participants were asked to rate their openness to technology on the PITS. The idea of a strong relationship with their grandchildren also provided motivation for the grandparents to utilize unfamiliar technologies. The participants were not on the front edge of the technology wave but they were still willing to develop new skills, as revealed in a comparison of the mean scores for use of different levels of technology. Personal observations and review of study results showed a technology lag, not a technology lack.

The lack showed up in the area of applying the technology to the faith-formation process. Table 4.4 (p. 132) reveals the stark statistics from the pre-survey, the PITS, indicating how few grandparents used technology in some manner of faith formation with

their grandchildren. Opportunity was knocking; the responses to the Final Information Technology Survey showed what can happen when the door is opened.

If the PITS responses were stark; the FITS scores were striking. Questions 1-10 dealt with the participants' attitudes toward technology, their use of technology during the study, and their anticipated use of technology in the future. The FITS revealed at the conclusion of the six-week intervention that the grandparents were willing to use technology to nurture their relationships with their grandchildren. It also indicated they had and were willing to use technology in the process of faith formation. The strongest responses were to questions 11 and 12, dealing with the grandparents' self-perception as faith mentors. The solid perception of being faith mentors was also supported from the data collect by the Final Assessment Tool.

The FAT results display the effectiveness of the intervention and the use of technology in faith formation. Following the six-week study, the grandparents' use of technology in the four faith-formation areas was positively impacted. The combined data from the FITS and the FAT strongly supported one of the primary hypotheses of the study: Technology can be an effective tool in the faith-formation process.

The participants raised two questions at the final focus group discussion that provided some thoughtful insights into the variety of technologies available and their effectiveness for use with grandchildren as they mature. One person asked, "What is the difference between talking on the phone and the use of video conferencing, FaceTime, or Skype in the quality of the interaction?" The overwhelming response was the availability of visual clues. The perception of the group was that the ability to see the grandchild had a significant impact on the feeling of connectedness, the appropriateness of responses,

and the maintaining of attention. This perception could be a factor of 6-12-year-olds being in the concrete stage of development.

The second question dealt with the use of texting. The responses indicated very little use of texting during the study. Once again the age was a big factor. Most of the grandchildren did not yet have a personal cell phone. Most of the grandparents thought that texting would be more appropriate for their teenage grandchildren.

One of the prominent trends of modern technology is the move toward smaller and more mobile devices. The shrinking size of these new technological platforms presents some intrinsic obstacles for grandparents as they age. The loss of manual dexterity in aging individuals makes it more difficult to operate the smaller keypads for grandparents. The diminishing of visual acuity in most elderly people makes seeing the diminutive characters on little screens more challenging. The constant upgrading of technology to new operating systems and applications causes frustration for those who may not be able to attain and retain information as they once did. Even with these hurdles, the strong relational affinity between grandparents and grandchildren motivated the grandparents to find and learn appropriate technological mediums to use with their grandchildren.

While 6-12-year-olds do not face the same issues that their grandparents face, the grandchildren have technological limitations of their own. Responsible use of the Internet makes supervision of preadolescents a necessary component for technology use for them. Also many parents are more comfortable for their young children to acquire their technological skills on earlier generations of technology because the older devices are more expendable.

Implications of the Findings

This study has demonstrated how two underutilized resources can be combined as an effective means of faith formation—grandparents and technology. The implications of the study are significant. A group of less than twenty grandparents have confirmed they can be a strong contributing influence in the faith-formation of their grandchildren through the use of technology.

Today's nomadic society is on the move. The application of mobile technology for mobile families creating a mobile faith our children can carry with them is an answer to prayer. The transportable and transferrable faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob can be applied in the modern context through the use of technology combined with the relational bonds of the extended family. Bringing together grandparents and grandchildren is a mixture of life experience and unlimited energy that contributes to having a viable and vibrant faith experience for both ends of the generational spectrum.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are numerous. The small and homogenous nature of the sample population makes generalization of the findings difficult. Nineteen grandparents and fifteen grandchildren participated in the study. They were all from very similar ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

The limited number of participants was also a factor in data analysis. It makes the results vulnerable to skewing. A small difference in reply rates can make a big difference in the results of the data.

The challenge of working with children combined with the complexities presented by the distances between the participants presented significant obstacles throughout the study. It revealed itself in the lower return of the final surveys by the grandchildren, nine out of fifteen. A related factor was the working with a three-generational population. While the study focused on the dynamics between grandparents and grandchildren, the part the parents played could not be ignored. The parents were a key component in enabling the grandchildren's participation. Parental involvement created the possibility they could influence the results.

In a society where families take many forms, shapes, and sizes the intervention focused on the nuclear extended family made up of grandparents, parents, and grandchildren. While a number of the families that participated were made up of single parents with children, all of the grandparent families had both a husband and wife. Even though three of the grandparents participated by themselves, they still had spouses.

While the findings of the study must be viewed through the lens of the limited population that participated, the premise of the study has some wide-ranging implications worthy of further investigation. Churches of various denominations, locations, and sizes could add to the pool of knowledge. People of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds could contribute a different, but much needed, perspective. The reactions and interactions of grandchildren and grandparents at different ages and stages of life would add valuable insights.

Unexpected Observations

The tears in the eyes of the grandfathers and the giddy grins on the faces of the grandmothers caught me off guard during the focus sessions. The intensity of emotion

could not be captured on the surveys, but it could not be ignored in the qualitative data gathering of the focus groups. The process and experience of the study touched many of the participating grandparents in a very powerful way. They were unabashedly grateful for the insights they had gained and truly excited about the opportunity to apply them with their grandchildren. I have always intuitively known what everyone knows through observation: grandparents and grandchildren have a very strong bond between them. I think I greatly underestimated the strength, extent, and power of that bond.

In a study examining the use of technology, one insight that produced the most emotion from the participants was the power of letters. They shared how they had been touched by letters they had gotten from their grandparents. With all the potential of technology, the study group recognized universally that incorporating the practice of letter-writing to grandchildren was a most valued endeavor.

The busyness of the modern family is overwhelming. The time demands of the various activities in which the grandchildren were involved were a factor in the participation of the grandchildren. On reflection I believe the high level of activities of older children could have been a major reason why the majority of the children who took part in the study were 6 and 7 years old. At that age they have not yet over committed to sports, scouts, church youth groups, and other activities. The travel schedules of the retired grandparents also reflected the crammed calendars of the culture.

Parents want and need the support of grandparents in the process of raising their children. When parents were asked how grandparents could be helpful to them in the parenting process, they enthusiastically responded. Prayer, providing a positive model of

Christian faithfulness, nurture, a secure relationship, and treasured time were some of the things parents valued most from the grandparents for their children and themselves.

Recommendations

One of the related topics to the study that captured my attention was the power of story in the areas of faith formation and identity formation. I believe one of the shortcomings of modern society is the inability to give children a sense of belonging and purpose. Too many young people have formed their life stories from the media, celebrities, or gangs. The family as a formative influence is struggling. The church has the opportunity to help reconnect the family faith story.

Technology is a tool that can be used to bring the place of formation back to the home. The continuing development of appropriate programs and applications such as *Vibrant Faith* and *Vibrant Faith@Home* can help equip the family and the church to tell the life-giving story of salvation. The church has an opportunity to equip and support parents and grandparents in their high calling of fanning the flame of faith in their lives and in the lives of those they love.

While the primary focus to the intervention was on the grandparent/grandchild relationship, the importance of another relationship also surfaced during the process. The relationship between the grandparent and the parent of the grandchild is a vital link that cannot be overlooked. The simple process of asking the parents of the grandchildren how the grandparents could be helpful in raising their children and imparting faith was enlightening.

Grandparenting covenants could be a helpful and intentional way of clarifying the grandparent/parent/grandchild relationship. Parents want what is best for their children.

Grandparents want what is best for their grandchildren. Many times this mutual desire is expressed in very different ways. A grandparenting covenant would recognize the parents' authority while utilizing the grandparents' influence as they work together toward the mutual goal of raising healthy children in the midst of an uncertain world.

The importance of grandparenting is an area of study that is expanding. I pray that this study can contribute in a small way to that body of knowledge and practice. Since the formation process is a long-term progression over time, researchers should conduct a longitudinal and ongoing study on the implications and impacts of the many facets of grandparenting. The formation of a grandparenting project would be a valuable asset for grandparenting in the present generation and the next.

Postscript

Reese's Peanut Butter Cups are my favorite candy. Everyone today recognizes that chocolate and peanut butter are a natural combination, but the combination was not always obvious. In the early 1900s, Harry Burnett Reese, a dairy farmer from Hershey, Pennsylvania, with sixteen children and a part-time job at the Hershey chocolate factory, started making chocolate confections in his basement. He came up with the idea to put these two independently delicious ingredients into one wonderful combination, and the Reese's Peanut Butter Cup was created.

In reality Reese did not come up with anything new. He just put two good things together and made an even better combination. As I look at the results of the study, I realize the findings of *Grandparenting the Next Generation: Fanning the Flame of Faith* really did not reveal anything new. Everyone knows grandparents and grandchildren have a unique, loving relationship. Not surprisingly, technology can be used to help people

communicate and strengthen their relationship. This limited study has revealed that the utilization of technology by grandparents in the process of faith formation of their grandchildren might be a winning combination.

APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM

Consent and Authorization to Be Research Participants

Title: Grandparenting, the Next Generation: Fanning the Flame of Faith

Principle Investigator: James F. Kinsler

Introduction/Purpose: You have volunteered to participate in a research study. The focus of this study is to minimize the barrier of physical distance between grandparents and grandchildren and maximize the power and process of family faith formation through the grandparent/grandchild relationship by the use of technology. You are being invited to participate because you are a grandparent of a grandchild that lives more than twenty miles away from you and you want to have a positive impact on the faith formation of your grandchild. This research is part of my Doctor of Ministry (DMin) dissertation at Asbury Theological Seminary. I pray that this experience will benefit not only you and your grandchild but will provide useful information for the building up of the body of Christ.

Participation/Duration/Time Required: There will be six two-hour seminars over a six-week period of time. The lessons will focus on the following areas:

- **Caring Conversations**
- **Family Traditions**
- **Bible Story**
- **Prayer**

In addition to the time at the seminars, you will spend time in contact with your grandchild through the use of technology over the six-week study period. As participants, you will complete pre-study and post-study assessment tools to gather and compare pertinent data for the study.

Technological Requirements: The participants can be at various levels of technological ability and comfort, from the techno-savvy to the techno-novice. The important aspect is the willingness to learn and share. The minimum requirement for technology is use of a computer, but other platforms such as iPads and smartphones can be used as well. Please remember that technology is the tool, the growth in relationship and faith is the goal.

Statement of Confidentiality: I will assign codes to all participants to record and report data. The list names and corresponding codes will remain secure and confidential.

Consent for Minor Child: In order for a grandparent/grandchild pair to take part in the study, the parent legal guardian of the minor child must give signed permission for the child to participate.

Voluntary Participation: The participation of you and your grandchild are completely voluntary. You may drop out of the study at any time. If you wish to discontinue your participation in the study, please contact the primary investigator at the address below.

If you consent to take part in the Grandparenting the Next Generation: Fanning the Flame of Faith Research Study and the terms listed above, please sign this consent form along with the parent or legal guardian of your grandchild. By signing the form, you freely consent to participate in the research study and confirm you have read the document. The primary researcher will retain a copy of the consent form and will give a copy to participants for your records.

Project Title: Grandparenting the Next Generation: Fanning the Flame of Faith

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I acknowledge that I have received a copy of both pages of the informed consent form.

_____ Date _____
Participating Grandparents

_____ Date _____
Participating Grandchild's Parent/Guardian

_____ Date _____
Principal Investigator

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS

What is *Grandparenting the Next Generation: Fanning the Flame of Faith*?

It is a supervised academic study conducted by Pastor Jim Kinsler of the Lutheran Church by the Lake as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree from Asbury Theological Seminary.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to investigate the use of technological connections so grandparents can be effective faith mentors for their grandchildren even though they don't live in close proximity to one another.

Who is Pastor Jim Kinsler?

Pastor Jim is the proud grandfather of Jonathan (age 13) and Matthew (age 10). He has been married for over 34 years to Martha Wallace Kinsler, a teacher at Abbeville High School, and is the father of three grown daughters, Emilee (mother of Jonathan and Matthew), Laura, and Mary. He has served as the pastor of Lutheran Church by the Lake since 2008 and in the parish ministry for over 32 years, serving parishes in West Virginia and South Carolina.

Who is supervising the study?

Pastor Jim is working on the study under the supervision of academic advisors from Asbury Theological Seminary. His advisors are Dr. Verna Lowe, chairperson of the Education Department of Asbury University and Dr. Milton Lowe, Director of Networks for the Beeson Institute, and Dr. Chris Kiesling, Professor of Human Development and Christian Discipleship. The Research and Reflection Team from Lutheran Church by the Lake is a group of eight individuals who meet with Pastor Jim on a regular basis to review and advise him in the process.

What topics will be covered?

Four topics will be addressed during the six weeks. They are Caring Conversations, Family Traditions, Bible Story, and Prayer.

What is the time commitment?

The study will take six weeks. The goal is to have the grandparents and grandchildren to interact through technology three times each week during the six-week study period. The length of the interactions will vary, but it is anticipated that the total time of the three interactions will not be more than two hours for any one week.

Will my child's identity be protected?

Yes! The grandparents will interact with their own grandchildren and the identities will be protected in the reporting process by a code system that will be maintained by Pastor Jim.

How will the results be reported?

Some results will be reported as quantitative statistical data. Other results will be qualitative information using the input from the online blog. The feedback will be categorized and analyzed to determine trends and themes. Individuals commenting through the blog will use a coding system, so the identity of the individual will not be known to anyone except Pastor Jim.

What will be my role as a parent of a grandchild in the study?

As a parent of the participating grandchild, you are asked to provide support, supervision, and assistance as needed. At the end of the study, you will also be part of the feedback cycle to help in gathering useful insights into the results of the interactions between grandparents and grandchildren.

What kinds of technology will be used?

The minimum level of technology to be used is a desktop computer and Skype. If you and the grandparents would rather use a laptop, tablet, or smartphone with an application such as FaceTime, those options are open to you as well.

What are the benefits for me and my child?

- Enriched relationship with between grandchildren and grandparents.
- Having the active and intentional support of a loving grandparent as a faith mentor for your child.
- The Search Institute has shown that one of the factors that help children thrive is the participation of significant adults in the life of a child.
- Satisfaction of gaining knowledge and competency in faith mentoring.
- A sense of gratification at contributing to spiritual development resources.
- Growing in your relationship with God.
- Having fun learning from others various methods used to raise healthy children.

Parent's permission and grandchild's participation:

A permission/consent form must be signed and on file from the parent/legal guardian of the participating grandchild. It is also important that the grandchildren involved have a willingness to participate.

Timeline:

Week 1—Background, Pre-intervention Assessments, and Introduction of Caring Conversations

Week 2—Caring Conversations

Week 3—Family Traditions

Week 4—Bible Story

Week 5—Prayer

Week 6—Post-intervention Assessments and Wrap-up

Thank you for considering participating in the study. I am grateful for your interest and look forward to working with you in this important endeavor.

RECRUITMENT INFORMATION FOR INTERESTED GRANDPARENTS

Grandparenting the Next Generation: Fanning the Flame of Faith is a supervised academic study conducted by Pastor Jim Kinsler of the Lutheran Church by the Lake as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree from Asbury Theological Seminary.

The reason for the meeting is to outline the purpose and extent of the study, the expectations of the participants, and the benefits you might anticipate. This quantitative mixed-methods study will explore the use of technology to enrich and enable grandparents' role as faith mentors for 6-12-year-old grandchildren. The literature review reveals a rich heritage of faith formation in Scripture and church tradition as more mature individuals within a kinship group nurtured the faith of the young. The examination of developmental theory and theorists supports the effective use of older individuals as mentors and examples for children. The analysis of technological-use trends for seniors and children reveals a viable connection is possible between grandparents and grandchildren through technology. Applying the research and resources of Search Institute and Vibrant Faith Ministries in the intervention phase provides a platform to test the hypothesis of the study.

Research Question #1

What were the grandparents' understandings, attitudes, and uses of faith-formational practices combined with technology prior to the six-week intervention?

Research Question #2

What changes in the grandparents were observed in their understandings, attitudes, and uses of faith-formational practices combined with technology after the six-week intervention?

Research Question #3

How did the six-week intervention impact the faith and relational perceptions of the grandchildren?

Three Phases

1. Pre-intervention—a series of preliminary tests to find out where participants are in three areas:
 - a. Technological adaptability and usage
 - b. Relationship with grandchildren
 - c. Faith mentoring

2. Intervention—a six-week period of time where participants will
 - a. Participate in a weekly seminar (90 min.)
 - b. Interact with grandchildren three times each week through the use of technology
 - c. Utilize faith-mentoring materials in the interactions in four areas
 - i. Caring conversations
 - ii. Family traditions and rituals
 - iii. Bible stories
 - iv. Prayer
 - d. Participate in an online blog to monitor reactions to the intervention process
3. Post-intervention—a series of tests to determine the impact of the intervention in three areas:
 - a. Technological adaptability and usage
 - b. Relationship with grandchildren
 - c. Faith mentoring

Minimum Technology Required:

1. Desk top or laptop computer
2. Access to Skype
3. Participation in online blog

Time required:

1. Participation in the weekly seminar for a six-week period
2. Three technological interactions with grandchild each week during the six-week period

Parent's permission and grandchild's participation:

A permission/consent form must be signed and on file from the parent/legal guardian of the participating grandchild. It is also important that the grandchildren involved have a willingness to participate.

Possible Benefits

- Enriched relationship with grandchildren
- Enhanced ability in use of technology
- Blessing of being a faith mentor for your grandchild
- Satisfaction of gaining knowledge and competency in faith mentoring
- A sense of gratification at contributing to spiritual development resources
- Growing in your relationship with God
- Having fun learning from other grandparents

Timeline:

Week 1—Background, Pre-intervention Assessments, and Introduction of Caring Conversations

Week 2—Caring Conversations

Week 3—Family Traditions

Week 4—Bible Story

Week 5—Prayer

Week 6—Post-intervention Assessments and Wrap-up

Thank you for considering participating in this study. I am grateful for your interest and look forward to working with you in this important endeavor.

APPENDIX B

SEARCH INSTITUTE 40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS AND PERMISSION

**40 Developmental Assets[®] for Children Grades K–3 (ages 5–9)**

Search Institute[®] has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as **Developmental Assets[®]**—that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.



External Assets	Support	1. Family Support —Family continues to be a consistent provider of love and support for the child's unique physical and emotional needs.
		2. Positive Family Communication —Parents and child communicate openly, respectfully, and frequently, with child receiving praise for her or his efforts and accomplishments.
		3. Other Adult Relationships —Child receives support from adults other than her or his parents, with the child sometimes experiencing relationships with a nonparent adult.
		4. Caring Neighborhood —Parents and child experience friendly neighbors who affirm and support the child's growth and sense of belonging.
		5. Caring School Climate —Child experiences warm, welcoming relationships with teachers, caregivers, and peers at school.
		6. Parent Involvement in Schooling —Parents talk about the importance of education and are actively involved in the child's school success.
	Empowerment	7. Community Values Children —Children are welcomed and included throughout community life.
		8. Children as Resources —Child contributes to family decisions and has opportunities to participate in positive community events.
		9. Service to Others —Child has opportunities to serve in the community with adult support and approval.
	Boundaries & Expectations	10. Safety —Parents and community adults ensure the child's safety while keeping in mind her or his increasing independence.
		11. Family Boundaries —The family maintains supervision of the child, has reasonable guidelines for behavior, and always knows where the child is.
		12. School Boundaries —Schools have clear, consistent rules and consequences and use a positive approach to discipline.
		13. Neighborhood Boundaries —Neighbors and friends, parents help monitor the child's behavior and provide feedback to the parents.
		14. Adult Role Models —Parents and other adults model positive, responsible behavior and encourage the child to follow these examples.
		15. Positive Peer Influence —Parents monitor the child's friends and encourage spending time with those who set good examples.
Internal Assets	Constructive Use of Time	16. High Expectations —Parents, teachers, and other influential adults encourage the child to do her or his best in all tasks and celebrate their successes.
		17. Creative Activities —Child participates weekly in music, dance, or other form of artistic expression outside of school.
	Commitment to Learning	18. Child Programs —Child participates weekly in at least one sport, club, or organization within the school or community.
		19. Religious Community —Child participates in age-appropriate religious activities and caring relationships that nurture her or his spiritual development.
		20. Time at Home —Child spends time at home playing and doing positive activities with the family.
	Positive Values	21. Achievement Motivation —Child is encouraged to remain curious and demonstrates an interest in doing well at school.
		22. Learning Engagement —Child is enthused about learning and enjoys going to school.
		23. Homework —With appropriate parental support, child completes assigned homework.
		24. Bonding to School —Child is encouraged to have and feels a sense of belonging at school.
		25. Reading for Pleasure —Child listens to and/or reads books outside of school daily.
		26. Caring —Parents help child grow in empathy, understanding, and helping others.
Internal Assets	Social Competencies	27. Equality and Social Justice —Parents encourage child to be concerned about rules and being fair to everyone.
		28. Integrity —Parents help child develop her or his own sense of right and wrong behavior.
		29. Honesty —Parents encourage child's development in recognizing and telling the truth.
		30. Responsibility —Parents encourage child to accept and take responsibility for her or his actions at school and at home.
		31. Self-Regulation —Parents encourage child's growth in regulating her or his own emotions and behaviors and in understanding the importance of healthy habits and choices.
		32. Planning and Decision Making —Parents help child think through and plan school and play activities.
	Positive Identity	33. Interpersonal Competence —Child seeks to build friendships and is learning about self-control.
		34. Cultural Competence —Child continues to learn about her or his own cultural identity and is encouraged to interact positively with children of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.
		35. Resistance Skills —Child is learning to recognize risky or dangerous situations and is able to seek help from trusted adults.
		36. Peaceful Conflict Resolution —Child continues learning to resolve conflicts without hitting, throwing a tantrum, or using hurtful language.

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Source: Search Institute, *40 Developmental Assets for Children: 40 Developmental Assets for Children Grades K-3*



40 Developmental Assets® for Middle Childhood (ages 8-12)

Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as “Developmental Assets”®—that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.



External Assets	Support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support. Positive family communication—Parent(s) and child communicate positively. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and counsel from parent(s). Other adult relationships—Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s). Caring neighborhood—Child experiences caring neighbors. Caring school climate—Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging environment. Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.
	Empowerment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Community values youth—Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community. Children as resources—Child is included in decisions at home and in the community. Service to others—Child has opportunities to help others in the community. Safety—Child feels safe at home, at school, and in his or her neighborhood.
	Boundaries & Expectations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Family boundaries—Family has clear and consistent rules and consequences and monitors the child's whereabouts. School boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences. Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring the child's behavior. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults in the child's family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behavior. Positive peer influence—Child's closest friends model positive, responsible behavior. High expectations—Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do her or his best at school and in other activities.
	Constructive Use of Time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Creative activities—Child participates in music, art, drama, or creative writing two or more times per week. Child programs—Child participates two or more times per week in cocurricular school activities or structured community programs for children. Religious community—Child attends religious programs or services one or more times per week. Time at home—Child spends some time most days both in high-quality interaction with parents and doing things at home other than watching TV or playing video games.
Internal Assets	Commitment to Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement Motivation—Child is motivated and strives to do well in school. Learning Engagement—Child is responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning at school, and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school. Homework—Child usually hands in homework on time. Bonding to school—Child cares about teachers and other adults at school. Reading for Pleasure—Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week.
	Positive Values	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Caring—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people. Equality and social justice—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal rights for all people. Integrity—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one's beliefs. Honesty—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth. Responsibility—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behavior. Healthy Lifestyle—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality.
	Social Competencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and decision making—Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with results of her or his decisions. Interpersonal Competence—Child cares about and is affected by other people's feelings; enjoys making friends; and when frustrated or angry, tries to calm her- or himself. Cultural Competence—Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and with her or his own cultural identity. Resistance skills—Child can stay away from people who are likely to get her or him in trouble and is able to say no to doing wrong or dangerous things. Peaceful conflict resolution—Child seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
	Positive Identity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Personal power—Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in her or his life. Self-esteem—Child likes and is proud to be the person that he or she is. Sense of purpose—Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life. Positive view of personal future—Child is optimistic about her or his personal future.

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Source: Search Institute, *40 Developmental Assets for Children: 40 Developmental Assets for Middle Children*

40 Developmental Asset Permission for Use



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April 15, 2013

Lutheran Church By The Lake
Attn: Jim Kinsler
100 Twelve Oaks Dr.
McCormick, SC 29835
864-391-3000
jim.kinsler@asburyseminary.edu

Dear Mr. Kinsler,

Thank you for your interest in Search Institute, and your request to use the Developmental Asset measures for your dissertation focusing on family support, positive family communication, other adult relationships, service to others, family boundaries, adult role models, religious community, and time at home. Permission is granted for educational, noncommercial research purposes for your proposed use based on the following conditions:

1. Proper copyright information must be included on the instrument and any resulting reports or publications. Below is our copyright citation:

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2. Permission is granted to the addressee, and is non-transferable.

Again, thank you for your interest in Search Institute and its resources. We wish you well with your research. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Justin Roskopf
Survey Services Coordinator

Please sign and date this letter and return a copy to us to indicate your acceptance of the above terms and conditions for your use of the survey items.

Date:

Signature:

Print Name:

Title:

APPENDIX C

PRE-INTERVENTION ASSESSMENT TOOL (PAT)

Name _____

1. What is your age? ☐ 50 and under ☐ 51-60 ☐ 61-70 ☐ 71 and older
2. What is the age of your grandchild?
3. How many miles away do you live from your grandchild?
4. How often do you physically see your grandchild in a year?

_____ 1 or fewer times a year _____ more than monthly, but less than weekly

_____ 2-6 times a year _____ weekly

_____ 7-12 times a year _____ daily

Using the 1-6 scale, please indicate how you would characterize your relationship with your grandchild. Please have your answers reflect the reality of your present situation, not what you would like it to be.

Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent			
1	2	3	4	5	6			
5.	My relationship with my grandchild is		1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	My relationship with the parents of my grandchild is		1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	My communication with my grandchild is		1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	My communication with the parents of my grandchild is		1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	My desire to have caring conversations with my grandchild is		1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	My ability to have caring conversations with my grandchild is		1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	My actual practice of having caring conversations with my grandchild is		1	2	3	4	5	6

12.	My desire to pray with my grandchild is	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	My ability to pray with my grandchild is	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	My actual practice of praying with my grandchild is	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	My desire to read/share Bible stories with my grandchild is	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	My ability to read/share Bible stories with my grandchild is	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	My actual practice of reading/sharing Bible stories with my grandchild is	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.	My desire to share family traditions with my grandchild is	1	2	3	4	5	6
19.	My ability to share family traditions with my grandchild is	1	2	3	4	5	6
20.	My actual sharing of family traditions with my grandchild is	1	2	3	4	5	6
21.	My relationship with God is	1	2	3	4	5	6

Using the 1-6 scale below, please rate your comfortability level in the use of various technologies.

Unfamiliar	Very Unsure	Unsure	Confident	Very Confident	Expert			
1	2	3	4	5	6			
1. Desktop Computer			1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Laptop Computer			1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Tablet			1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Smartphone			1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Cell Phone			1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Gaming System (Wii, etc.)			1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Please list any other forms of technology you use and the corresponding level of comfort/ability you have in using it.								

Using the 1-6 scale, please rate your comfort/ability level in the use of the various applications listed below.

8. E-mail	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Skype	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Texting	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Facebook	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. FaceTime	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Interactive Games	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Please list any other applications you use and the corresponding level of ability.						

Pre-Intervention Information Technology Survey (PITS)**Page 2****What forms of technology do you use to enrich your relationship with your grandchild?**

If you have never used technology for the purpose listed please put an "N" in the "Other" space. Under the frequency of use, please indicate the selection that most closely matches your present practice. If none of the responses closely match your present practice, please use the "Other" space to write your response.

Technology Frequency of Use

- | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------|
| 15. ____E-mail | Daily____ | Weekly____ | Twice a month____ | Monthly____ | Other____ |
| 16. ____Skype | Daily____ | Weekly____ | Twice a month____ | Monthly____ | Other____ |
| 17. ____FB* | Daily____ | Weekly____ | Twice a month____ | Monthly____ | Other____ |
| 18. ____Text | Daily____ | Weekly____ | Twice a month____ | Monthly____ | Other____ |
| 19. ____FT+ | Daily____ | Weekly____ | Twice a month____ | Monthly____ | Other____ |
| 20. ____Games | Daily____ | Weekly____ | Twice a month____ | Monthly____ | Other____ |
| 21. ____Phone▲ | Daily____ | Weekly____ | Twice a month____ | Monthly____ | Other____ |
| 22. ____Cell➤ | Daily____ | Weekly____ | Twice a month____ | Monthly____ | Other____ |
| 23. ____Smart◆ | Daily____ | Weekly____ | Twice a month____ | Monthly____ | Other____ |
| 24. ____Comp■ | Daily____ | Weekly____ | Twice a month____ | Monthly____ | Other____ |
| 25. ____Tablet | Daily____ | Weekly____ | Twice a month____ | Monthly____ | Other____ |

*Facebook

+FaceTime

▲Home telephone

➤Cell phone, regular

◆Smartphone

■Computer, laptop or desktop

❖Gaming system

26. Please list any other forms of technology you use to enrich your relationship with your grandchild and how frequently you use them for that purpose.

Pre-Intervention Information Technology Survey (PITS)**page 3****What forms of technology do you use to help enhance your grandchild's faith-formation process?**

If you have never used technology for this purpose please put an "N" in the "Other" space. Under the frequency of use, please indicate the selection that most closely matches your present practice. If none of the responses closely match your present practice, please use the "Other" space to write your response.

Technology Frequency of Use

- | | | | | | |
|---------------|----------|-----------|------------------|------------|----------|
| 27. ___E-mail | Daily___ | Weekly___ | Twice a month___ | Monthly___ | Other___ |
| 28. ___Skype | Daily___ | Weekly___ | Twice a month___ | Monthly___ | Other___ |
| 29. ___FB* | Daily___ | Weekly___ | Twice a month___ | Monthly___ | Other___ |
| 30. ___Text | Daily___ | Weekly___ | Twice a month___ | Monthly___ | Other___ |
| 31. ___FT+ | Daily___ | Weekly___ | Twice a month___ | Monthly___ | Other___ |
| 32. ___Games | Daily___ | Weekly___ | Twice a month___ | Monthly___ | Other___ |
| 33. ___Phone^ | Daily___ | Weekly___ | Twice a month___ | Monthly___ | Other___ |
| 34. ___Cell> | Daily___ | Weekly___ | Twice a month___ | Monthly___ | Other___ |
| 35. ___Smart◆ | Daily___ | Weekly___ | Twice a month___ | Monthly___ | Other___ |
| 36. ___Comp■ | Daily___ | Weekly___ | Twice a month___ | Monthly___ | Other___ |
| 37. ___Tablet | Daily___ | Weekly___ | Twice a month___ | Monthly___ | Other___ |

*Facebook

+FaceTime

^Home telephone

>Cell phone, regular

◆Smartphone

■Computer, laptop or desktop

❖Gaming system

38. Please list any other forms of technology you use to enhance your grandchild's faith-formation process and how frequently you use them for that purpose.


39. Use the 1-6 scale below to characterize your attitude towards new technology.

Non-adapter	Resistant Adapter	Hesitant Adapter	Adapter	Eager Adapter	Eager Early Adapter
1	2	3	4	5	6


Pre-intervention Assessment by Grandchildren

Parents please assist as needed and when asking questions of your child about their grandparents, please use the name that the child uses for their grandparent, i.e., Nana, Granny, G-Paw, Pop Pop.


Relationship:

1. Out of the following list of people you know draw a heart or right click to drag, drop and paste a heart  on the three or four that you think love you the most.


Parents	Grandparents	Friends	Neighbors	Relatives
Teachers	Pastor/Minister	Coaches	Other _____	

2. Out of the following list of people you know draw a smiley face or right click on icon to drag, drop, and paste a smiley face  on the three or four that you most like to be with.



Parents	Grandparents	Friends	Neighbors	Relatives
Teachers	Pastor/Minister	Coaches	Other _____	

3. Out of the following list of people you know draw a star or right click to drag, drop, and paste a star  on the three or four that have taught the most about God.

Parents	Grandparents	Friends	Neighbors	Relatives
Teachers	Pastor/Minister	Coaches	Other _____	

4. Out of the following list of people you know draw a star or right click to drag, drop and paste a star  on the people you would trust to ask a question about God.

Parents	Grandparents	Friends	Neighbors	Relatives
Teachers	Pastor/Minister	Coaches	Other _____	

- 5. When your parents tell you your grandparents are on the phone or computer and want to talk to you, how do you feel?** Please circle the answer that you feel, or drag, drop, and paste a cloud  on the sad side, or a sun  on the happy.



Very Sad

Sad



A Little Sad

A Little Happy

Happy

Very Happy

Why?

- 6. When your grandparents know that you are on the phone or computer and want to talk to you, imagine how you think they feel?** Please circle the answer that you feel, or drag, drop, and paste a cloud  on the sad side, or a sun  on the happy.



Very Sad

Sad

A Little Sad

A Little Happy

Happy

Very Happy

Why?

- 7. If I were really worried about something, I could talk to my grandparents about it.** Please circle or drag, drop, and paste a check on your response.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

- 8. When I talk to my grandparents they listen and are interested in what I tell them.** Please circle or drag, drop, and paste a check on your response.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

- 9. What are some things you enjoy doing with your grandparents?**

PRE-INTERVENTION ASSESSMENT BY PARENTS

1. What ways could the grandparents of your children be most helpful to you in the process of parenting?
2. What ways could the grandparents of your children be most helpful in the faith development of your child/children?

APPENDIX D

SKYPE INSTRUCTIONS

What is Skype? Skype is computer software that is free to download. It allows video calling through the Internet. It is necessary to have a computer or a mobile device with speakers and an Internet connection. If the device is not equipped with an internal webcam, one will need to be purchased for video calling.

- 1) a) Go to www.skype.com and download the Skype software. The taskbar at the top of the page has a tab labeled “download.” Click the tab and follow the instructions. A free version of Skype is available that does not require credit card information. The free version is sufficient for your conversations.

b) Several options are offered on the download page. One option is to uncheck the extra downloads that are offered. They are not necessary for running Skype. After checking or unchecking the appropriate boxes, press “Save” and “Launch” to begin the download.
- 2) Open a new account for Skype if you do not already have one. You will be asked for a username and password. You will also be asked for your e-mail address. Your username is the name that will appear to people you are calling. Make sure you record the information so you can find it later. Skype will automatically open when you turn on your computer unless you check the box indicating it to not open until prompted. If you are not using Skype, it will cause your computer to operate much slower if it is running in the background.
- 3) Log on to Skype. You will be prompted to locate your contacts. You can search for your contacts through a user name, phone number, or e-mail. You will need to be accepted by the other person before you can have a Skype conversation with them.
- 4) Click on the “Help” menu to check your audio, video, and privacy settings. Click on the Call tab. Click on privacy settings. You can choose to have only people in your contact list to be able to call you. Click “speakers” and click on the green button to check your sound. Click the “Test Microphone” button. When talking into the microphone the bar in the testing screen moves to indicate your microphone is working. Click the “Test Video” button if your webcam is connected. If you do not see a live video check your video settings. You can adjust audio and video settings and make a test call. Save settings.

- 5) Make a free call. The person you are calling needs to be online. There will be a green check by the names of the people online. Double click on their name and choose video call.
- 6) We will have technology assistance available, if needed.
- 7) Have fun!

Sincerely,

APPENDIX E

FINAL ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Final Assessment Tool (FAT)—Grandparent-Grandchild Relationship

1. How often were you in contact with your grandchild through technology during the study?

_____ more than once a day _____ daily _____ several times a week
 _____ weekly (once a week) _____ less than weekly
 _____ Other _____

Using the 1-6 scale below, please indicate how your participation in the study impacted your understanding, attitude, and practice of the use of technology as a tool that can used to contribute in a positive way to the faith-formation process with your grandchild.

Declined Greatly	Declined	Declined a little	Improved a Little	Improved	Improved Greatly	
1	2	3	4	5	6	
1. My relationship with my grandchild has			1	2	3	4 5 6
2. My relationship with the parents of my grandchild has			1	2	3	4 5 6
3. My communication with my grandchild has			1	2	3	4 5 6
4. My communication with the parents of my grandchild has			1	2	3	4 5 6
5. My desire to have caring conversations with my grandchild has			1	2	3	4 5 6
6. My ability to have caring conversations with my grandchild has			1	2	3	4 5 6
7. The likeliness of my having a caring conversations with my grandchild has			1	2	3	4 5 6
8. My desire to pray with my grandchild has			1	2	3	4 5 6

9.	My ability to pray with my grandchild has	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	The likeliness of my praying with my grandchild has	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	My desire to read share Bible stories with my grandchild has	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	My ability to read share Bible stories with my grandchild has	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	The likeliness of my reading/sharing Bible stories with my grandchild via technology has	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	My desire to share family traditions with my grandchild has	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	My ability to share family faith traditions with my grandchild has	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	The likeliness of my family traditions with my grandchild has	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	My relationship with God has	1	2	3	4	5	6



Final Information Technology Survey (FITS) Name _____

Using the 1-6 scale below, please rate the impact the study has had on your level of comfort and ability to use of various technologies.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree			
1	2	3	4	5	6			
1. I am more likely to use technology to interact with my grandchild (GC) than before the study.			1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I have a greater knowledge of available technologies and their relational applications.			1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I am more frustrated with technology now than when the study began.			1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I have grown in my ability to share my faith with my GC through the use of technology.			1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I believe technology is an effective tool to enhance the faith-formation process of my GC.			1	2	3	4	5	6
6. During the study I had meaningful interactions with my GC through the use of technology.			1	2	3	4	5	6
7. I have found the Vibrant Faith Web site an effective resource for faith-formatinal ideas.			1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I will continue to use the Vibrant Faith Web site.			1	2	3	4	5	6
9. My willingness to explore new uses of technologies and applications to enhance my relationship with my GC has increased.			1	2	3	4	5	6
10. I see technology as a bridge to enhance my ability to stay connected to my GC.			1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I see myself as a faith mentor for my GC.			1	2	3	4	5	6
12. I have grown in my understanding of the importance of the grandparent/grandchild relationship in faith formation during the study.			1	2	3	4	5	6

FINAL EVALUATION BY GRANDCHILDREN

Parents please assist as needed and when asking questions of your child about their grandparents, please use the name that the child uses for their grandparent, i.e. Nana, Granny, G-Paw, Pop Pop.

1. **When you think about God how do you feel?** Please circle the response that you feel, or drag, drop, and paste a cloud  on the sad side, or a sun  on the happy.



Very Sad



Sad



A Little Sad



A Little Happy




Happy



Very Happy

Why?

2. **Out of the following list of people you know draw a star or right click to drag, drop, and paste a star  on the three or four that have taught the most about God.**

Parents

Grandparents

Friends

Neighbors

Relatives

Teachers

Pastor Minister

Coaches

Other _____

3. **If I were really worried about something, I could talk to my grandparents about it.** Please circle or drag, drop, and paste a check on your answer.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

4. **When I talk to my grandparents they listen and are interested in what I tell them.** Please circle or drag, drop, and paste a check on your answer.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

5. **What are some things you enjoyed doing with your grandparents over the last six weeks?**

6. **What would you like to tell your grandparents about talking on the computer?**

FINAL ASSESSMENT BY PARENTS

1. What have been your observations of the interaction between your parent(s) and your child/children?

2. What activities did you think were most effective over the study period?

3. What activities were least effective?

4. What changes, if any, did you notice in your child's attitudes, perceptions and practices towards their grandparent(s)?

5. What changes, if any, did you notice in your child's attitudes, perceptions and practices in their expression of faith?

6. Please share your recommendations as to how grandparents can best use technology in mentoring grandchildren?

APPENDIX F

DATA COLLECTION FLOW CHART

Legend of Abbreviations: Data Type: Quantitative—QN Qualitative—QL

PARTICIPANTS: **GP—GRANDPARENTS** **GC—GRANDCHILD**

RE—RESEARCHER **P—PARENT**

type of action:	ff—face-to-face	ss—seminar session
	tc—technology connection	tp—teaching presentation
	fg—focus group	ij—Internet journaling
	nt—notes taken (written)	tr—tape-recorded
	rm—researcher monitored	ra—results analyzed

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS:

Surveys

PITS—Pre-Intervention Information Technology Survey

PAT—Pre-Intervention Assessment Tool

PABG—Pre-Intervention By Grandchildren

PABP—Pre-Intervention By Parents

FITS—Final Information Technology Survey

FAT—Final Assessment Tool

FABG—Final Assessment by Grandchildren

FABP—Final Assessment by Parents

ProtocolsGIG—Grandparent/Grandchild Interaction GuideBIG—Blog Interaction GuideSIG—Seminar Interaction GuideFIG—Final Interaction Guide**Time Sequencing: W1—Week One DW—During Week****Data Collection Flow Chart**

Time	Data Collection	Intervention
W1	<u>PAT</u> /QN/GP/rm/ra	ss1
W1	<u>PITS</u> /QN/GP/rm/ra	ss1
W1	Introduction to Study Process/Topics	ss1—RE/tp
W1	fg/ff/QL/RE-GP/ <u>SIG</u> /nt/tr/ra	ss1
W1/DW	<u>PABG</u> /QN+QL/P-GC/ra	
W1/DW	<u>PABP</u> /QL/P/ra	
W1/DW	<u>40DAS</u> /QN/P-GC/tc/ra	
W1/DW	ij/tc/QL/GP/BIG/rm/ra	
W1/DW	GP-GC/QL/GIG/tc/nt/ra	GP-GC/tc/nt
W2	Vibrant Faith/Caring Conversations	ss2—RE/tp
W2	fg/ff/QL/RE-GP/ <u>SIG</u> /nt/tr/ra	ss2
W2/DW	ij/tc/QL/GP/BIG/rm/ra	
W2/DW	GP-GC/QL/GIG/tc/nt/ra	GP-GC/tc/nt
W3	Vibrant Faith/Family Traditions	ss3—RE/tp

W3	fg/ff/QL/RE-GP/ <u>SIG</u> /nt/tr/ra	ss3
W3/DW	ij/tc/QL/GP/BIG/rm/ra	
W3/DW	GP-GC/QL/GIG/tc/nt/ra	GP-GC/tc/nt
W4	Vibrant Faith/Bible Stories	ss4—RE/tp
W4	fg/ff/QL/RE-GP/ <u>SIG</u> /nt/tr/ra	ss4
W4/DW	ij/tc/QL/GP/BIG/rm/ra	
W4/DW	GP-GC/QL/GIG/tc/nt/ra	GP-GC/tc/nt

Data Collection Flow Chart

Time	Data Collection	Intervention
W5	Vibrant Faith Prayer	ss5—RE/tp
W5	fg/ff/QL/RE-GP/ <u>SIG</u> /nt/tr/ra	ss5
W5/DW	ij/tc/QL/GP/BIG/rm/ra	
W5/DW	GP-GC/QL/GIG/tc/nt/ra	GP-GC/tc/nt
W6	Wrap-Up of Study Process	ss5—RE/tp
W6	fg/ff/QL/RE-GP-GC/ <u>FIG</u> /nt/tr/ra	ss5
W6	<u>FAT</u> /QN/GP/rm/ra	ss5
W6	<u>FITS</u> /QN/GP/rm/ra	ss5
W6	<u>FABG</u> /QL-QN/P-GC/ra	
W6	<u>FABP</u> /QL/P/ra	

APPENDIX G

PROTOCOLS

BIG—Blog Interaction Guide

PURPOSE: You will use an Internet journaling process, also known as a BLOG,

1. To put into practice and reinforce some of the technological skills that are part of this study,
2. To create a cross pollination of ideas and practices about grandparenting and faith formation, which will enable all the participants in the study to learn from each other what they are doing;
3. To provide a place of support as you try something new; and,
4. To allow your experience to be used as a building block for further understanding.

PROCEDURE:

Log onto the BLOG at least once a week. The focus of the week will follow the seminar topics of that week. You will need to respond to an initial comment and the progressive comments made by others to develop a stream of interaction.

POLITE POLICY:

A few words of guidance: stay considerate of others, stay on track, and stay tuned!

SIG: Seminar Interaction Guide

PURPOSE:

1. To create a cross pollination of ideas and practices about grandparenting and faith formation to enable all the participants in the study to learn from each other what they are doing.
2. To provide a place of support as you try something new.
3. To allow your experience to be used as a building block for further understanding.

PROCEDURE: You will have an opportunity for a brief time of feedback, processing, dealing with problems, and celebrating successes after each seminar.

POLICY: Be polite; be honest; be open.

The GIG: Grandparent Grandchild Interaction Guide

PURPOSE:

1. Allow the participants in the study to experience the joy of interaction between grandparents and their grandchildren through the use of technology.
2. To encourage practice of concepts and skills learned in the seminar sessions.
3. To allow your experience to be used as a building block for further understanding.

PROCEDURE:

1. Interact with your grandchild through the use of Skype or other technology.
Focus on the faith-formation concepts presented at the seminar and on Vibrant Faith.
2. Make a personal record of the highlights of your interaction.
3. Share what you feel is appropriate on the blog and during reflection time at the next seminar session.

POLICY: Have fun, have confidence, and be open to God's rich blessing.

The FIG: Final Interaction Guide

PURPOSE:

1. Allow the participants in the study to express their thoughts and feelings concerning interactions between grandparents and their grandchildren through the use of technology.
2. To encourage the continued practice of concepts and skills learned in the seminars in relationship building and faith formation with grandchildren.
3. To use this experience as a building block for further understanding.

PROCEDURE:

Ask open-ended questions. Listen. Respond with leading follow-up questions.

What kind of impact has the study had on your use of technology?

What kind of impact has the study had on your relationship with your grandchild?

What kind of impact has the study had on your relationship with God?

What resources would be helpful in your role as a faith mentor for your grandchild?

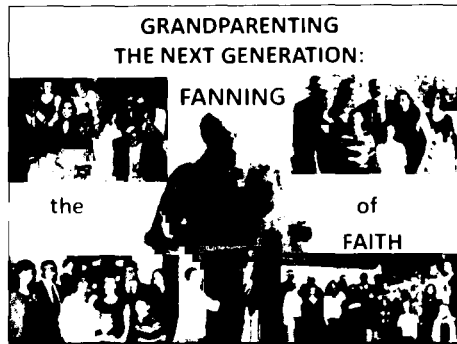
POLICY: Show respect, be honest, and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

APPENDIX H

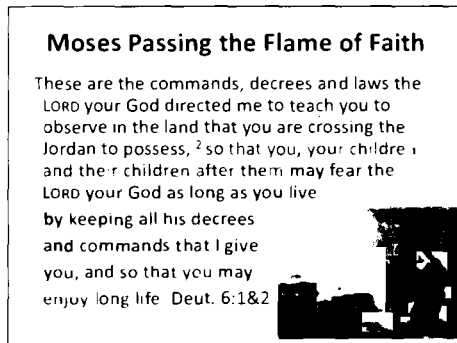
GRANDPARENTING THE NEXT GENERATION

Introduction

Slide 1




Slide 2



Slide 3


**Hear, O Israel,*
(Those who WRESTLE with GOD)**



Hear, O Israel: The LORD
God, the LORD is one ⁵
Love the LORD your God
with all your heart and
with all your soul and with
all your strength. ⁶ These
commandments that I give
you today are to be on
your hearts. Deut 6:4-6

Slide 4


**Faith Guidelines for
Families in Transition**



Impress them on your children.
Talk about them when you sit at
home and when you walk along
the road, when you lie down and
when you get up.
⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind
them on your foreheads Deut 6:7&8

Slide 5


**"Let the little children come to me; do
not stop them; for it is to such as these
that the kingdom of God belongs.**



And Jesus took
them up in his
arms, laid hands
on them, and
blessed them.

Matt. 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16,
Luke 18:15-17

Slide 6





**From
Generation to Generation**


I, Paul, am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God

2 Tim 1:5,6

Slide 7




**John Chrysostom
(347-407)**

**saw the family as
"sacred community"
or "little church."**

A priest and bishop in Asia Minor during the fourth century, John Chrysostom emphasized the relational aspects of the Trinity as his model for the family. "Parents who are worshippers of the triune God are called upon to emulate God the Father's love for his Son, while children should love and obey their parents as the Son loves and obeys the Father through the Spirit."

Slide 8



**Martin Luther's Small Catechism
"Handbook for the Christian
Household."**

- The Small Catechism was a basic Christian primer for all believers. It was written for the head of the household to instruct the family in basic tenets of the faith.
- The Small Catechism, called an enchiridion, or handbook, addressed the explanations to the heads of households. Luther meant parents to use the explanations to explain the various texts of the lay Bible to their children.

Slide 9

**Luther (1483-1546) Combined
Faith, Family & Technology**

Luther included the basic *liturgy* of the household, prayers at meals, morning and evening, with instructions that these prayers be memorized. Those liturgical moments fit not the spiritual life of the monastic world but the daily schedule of common household: rising, eating, and sleeping (Wengert 379).

One of the aspects of Luther's genius was to combine the technological development of the printing press with timeless structure of the family in producing the catechism.



Slide 10

Robert Raikes (1736-1811)**Response to a Revolution:****Sunday School**

The Industrial Revolution not only shifted the production of goods away from small family-based enterprises, it also shifted the faith formation process away from the home and into an institutional endeavor.

In 1783 the first Sunday schools had two purposes:

1. to instruct the children in basic educational aims,
2. to evangelize those who were in desperate need for new life within.



Slide 11

John Wesley (1703-1791)**The Pragmatic Preacher**

The goal of all Wesley's work with children at home, in the schools, in the Methodist society was


- To make them pious,
 - To lead to personal religion, and
 - To ensure salvation
- Wesley exhorted preachers to spend time with children and directed them to formalize a group of at least ten children.



Slide 12

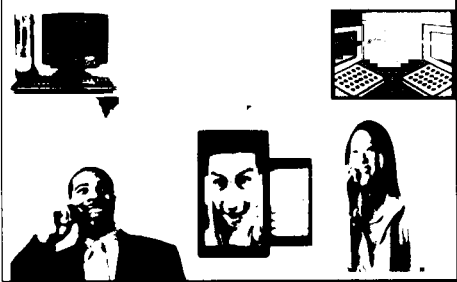
Horace Bushnell (1802-1876)

His text, *Christian Nurture*, published in 1847, introduced the idea of faith formation, a child would grow up knowing Christ as a result of learning from the example, nurture, and love of committed Christian parents



Slide 13

Dawning of the Information Age



Slide 14

Kids & Caring Adults

- According to Search Institute research, only 45 percent of middle- and high-school-aged youth surveyed indicate that they have three or more caring adults (other than their parents) to whom they can turn to for advice and support about important questions in life.¹

Slide 15

Parents Need Support As Well

- Nearly 3 in 10 parents surveyed report no support from any source other than their spouse or partner—not even from extended family. Nearly 60 percent have only one source of support other than their spouse or partner.²

Source: Search Institute, 2005. 2003 weighted aggregate dataset; unpublished report.

Slide 16

Communication Is Key

According to Search Institute research, percent of young people say they have family support. Only 30 percent, however, felt they had positive family communication. Some researchers think this represents the difference between how positively families feel toward each other and how well they actually communicate.¹

Source: Search Institute, 2005. 2003 weighted aggregate dataset; unpublished report.

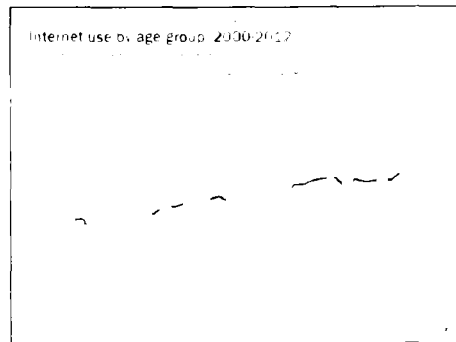
Slide 17

Communication Breakdown

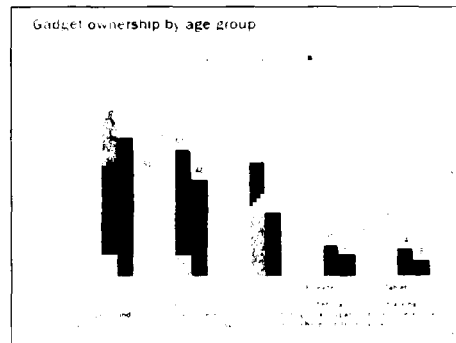
Positive family communication is much more common among younger kids than older teenagers; 47 percent of sixth graders report positive family communication, but only 22 percent of high school seniors do.¹

Source: Search Institute, 2005. 2003 weighted aggregate dataset; unpublished report.

Slide 18



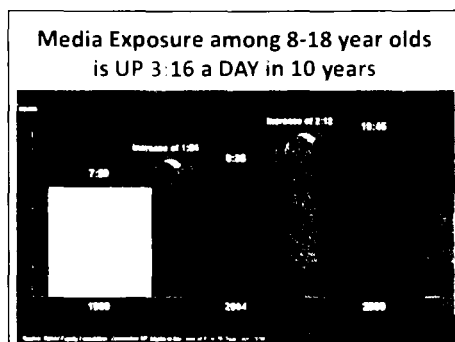
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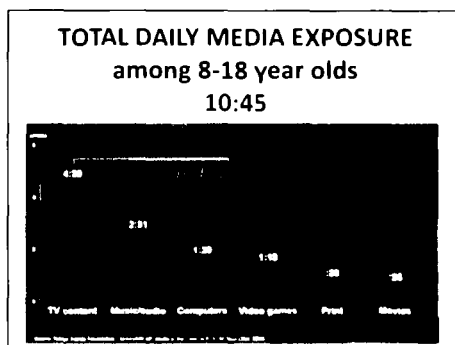
Slide 20

Smartphone Ownership 2012	
All adults (n=3,014)	45%
Men (n=1,337)	46%
Women (n=1,677)	45%
Age	
18-29 (n=478)	66%
30-49 (n=733)	59%
50-64 (n=814)	52%
65+ (n=830)	41%

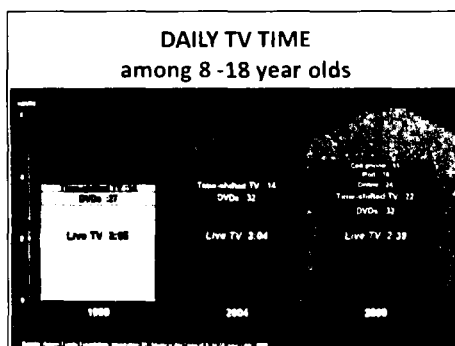
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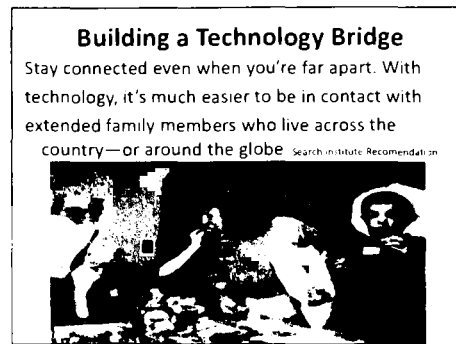
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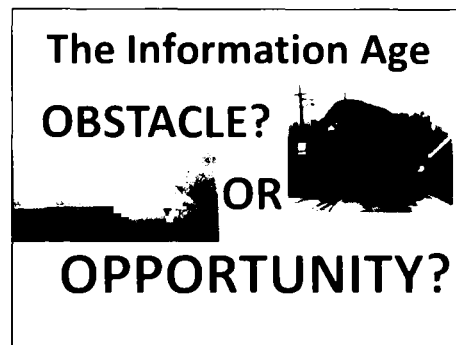
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Slide 24

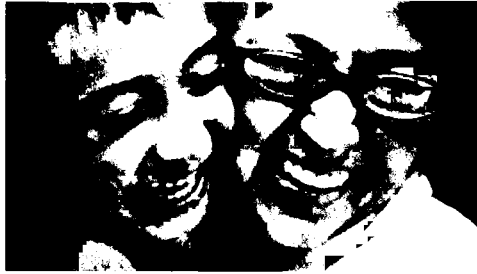


Slide 25

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APPENDIX I

VIBRANT FAITH AT HOME TOOLS



When discussing ideas for your family's Lenten journey (perhaps not only what to give up, but what to "add on"), start by taking a personal inventory of God-given gifts. This exercise is a prayer of gratitude in and of itself. God gives all of his children the "own special" talents so they may better serve him by serving others.

For
Young Families

Season
Spring, before or during Lent

Needed
"Gifts From God Inventory," pencil, pen or highlighter

Prepare in advance
Make copies of the "Gifts From God Inventory" (one for each family member, including parents)

Activity Plan

1. Say this prayer aloud to begin:
Dear Father, thank you for making us special. Help each of us to use our gifts and talents to best serve you by serving others, particularly as we prepare for Easter during this Lenten season. Amen.
2. Give each family member a copy of "Gifts from God Inventory" for the review.
3. From the list, identify each gift that has been given to you by praying, understanding or highlighting it. There is no limit to the number of words you may choose.
 - This is only a partial list to get you started. In the blank spaces, add any gifts, talents or special traits that you possess that are not on the list.
4. When everyone is done, each person can share their list (out loud) with the group.
 - No doubt many kind words will be generated by this conversation, as family members agree with the individual assessments and "key add on to it" (It is sometimes difficult to see in ourselves what others see.)
5. Discuss how you can use these gifts during Lent—in the way of prayer and charity—to help prepare for the Easter season.



Name _____

Gifts from God Inventory

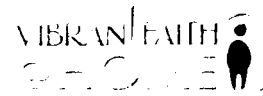
Recognizing our talents and gifts is a way to thank God for his generosity, as well as determine how we can serve best God by serving others. Using the list below, identify gifts God has given to you by circling underlining, or highlighting them. Add more in the blank spaces. Discuss your inventory with your family.

Able to work on my own	Easy to get along with	Good at math
Accepting	Faithful	Musical
Active	Good family member	Neat
Adventurous	Forgiving	Patient
Athletic	Friendly	Patnotic
Brave	Fun-loving	Polite
Calm	Gentle	Polite to grown-ups
Careful	Good at going to bed	Prayerful
Caring	Good at waking up	Likes to sing
Cautious	Generous	Questioning
Helps with chores	Grateful	Good at puzzles
Enjoys going to church	Independent	Quiet during church
Considerate	Happy	Enjoys reading
Crafty	Good at homework	Responsible
Creative	Honest	Good at science
Likes to dance	Good joke teller	Smart
Devoted	Joyful	Sporty
Good at drawing	Kind	Spunky
Full of energy	Leader	Trustworthy
Entertaining	Loving	Thoughtful
Easy-going	Loyal	Works well with others

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Source: Vibrant Faith at Home, *Caring Conversations: Gifts from God Inventory*



By Julie Filby

Make a cloud in a jar to accompany the story of Jesus' transfiguration, when God spoke of Jesus with love and approval. To the disciples, God appeared to be speaking from a cloud.

For
Young Family

Season
Summer; perhaps near August 6, when Roman Catholics observe the Feast of the Transfiguration

Needed

very hot water, clear jar or drinking glass, metal bowl to set on top of the jar or glass, ice cubes or freezer, Bible, bookmark

Prepare in Advance

Place a bookmark at Matthew 17:1-13 in your Bible. Fill the metal bowl with ice cubes or place it in the freezer to make it very cold. Heat some water.

Activity Plan

1. Gather the family around a table and begin with prayer:

Bless our time together, O God, and open our hearts and minds to learn from your Word. Amen.

2. Ask someone to read aloud Matthew 17:1-13 from your Bible or from the text at the end of this activity.
3. After reading the story, work together to make a jar of clouds:
 - Carefully pour one inch of very hot water in a clear jar or drinking glass.
 - Place the metal bowl (dump out the ice first) on top of the jar or glass.
 - The vapor rising from the hot water will meet the cold air sinking from the bowl, causing condensation—a cloud.
4. As you admire your cloud, discuss how the apostles might have felt when they heard God's voice from the cloud. Do you think the presence of the cloud made them pay more attention to the words? Why or why not? What do you think the disciples learned from this experience? What do you learn from their story?
5. Talk about the ways Christians today might hear God's voice. (For example, in prayer, worship, Bible reading, or the words and actions of another person.)



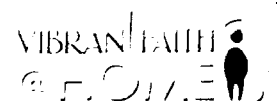
Matthew 17:1-13

¹ And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. ³ And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." ⁵ He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." ⁸ And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

⁹ And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead." ¹⁰ And the disciples asked him, "Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" ¹¹ He answered, "Elijah does come, and he will restore all things." ¹² But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands." ¹³ Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.



Source: Vibrant Faith at Home, *Ritual & Traditions: God in the Clouds*



by Beth Beall

The Bible says that God is like many different things. God is like light and wind. God is like a mother hen and a loving shepherd and a great king. God is also like a rock. In this activity you will read some Bible verses that describe God as a rock. Then you'll search for a special rock of your own.

For
Just for Kids

Season
Summer

Needed

The Bible passage on the last page of this activity.

Optional: old crayons, a cookie sheet, an oven, and either old newspapers or an old towel

Optional: *Everybody Needs a Rock*, a book by Byrd Baylor. The book may be available at your local library.



Activity Plan

1. Begin with a prayer. You might like to place your hands over your heart as you pray silently or aloud. If you'd like to use words, you could try these: *"Loving God, you are strong like a rock. I can always lean against you. Thank you for taking care of me. Amen."*
2. On your own or with an adult, read Psalm 18 on the last page. (Note: Psalm is pronounced "Sahlm." The Psalms are a collection of prayers in the Bible.)
3. After reading the Psalm, select one or more of these questions to think about or to discuss with someone else:
 - Think of some of the rocks you've seen before. What are a few words you might use to describe those rocks? (For example, were they large, small, smooth, bumpy, multi-colored, oval-shaped, heart-shaped, egg-shaped?)
 - I wonder how you think God might be like a rock?
 - The Psalm says that God is like a steady rock under our feet. The Psalm also says that God is like a rock we can hide in. I wonder if you like one of those images more than the other: a steady rock under your feet, or a hiding place rock?
4. Find some time to look for a special rock. Maybe there is a rock near your house. Or maybe you will be out walking some day, thinking about nothing at all, and suddenly you will see a rock that catches your eye. You might be surprised at all the places you start seeing rocks. Try to find one that you are allowed to keep, and bring it home with you.



- 5 If your special rock is small, you might carry it in your pocket. If your rock is large, maybe you can find a place for it in your home. When you touch it, perhaps your heart will remember that God is like a rock.

Optional Activities

- Here is an art project you might like to do with a rock.
 - ✓ Begin by washing any dirt off your rock.
 - ✓ Then ask an adult to put the rock on a baking sheet and heat it in a 350-degree oven for 10-15 minutes.
 - ✓ While the rock is heating, peel the paper off of some old crayons. Also place several layers of newspaper or an old towel on your workspace.
 - ✓ The adult will remove the hot rock from the oven and place it on top of your newspaper or towel. IMPORTANT: THE ROCK WILL BE VERY HOT. DON'T TOUCH IT!
 - ✓ Now comes the really fun part! Pick up a crayon and simply press it against the rock. Again, DO NOT TOUCH THE ROCK WITH YOUR BARE FINGERS. Let the crayon, not your fingers, touch the rock. As you press the crayon against the rock, it will melt like butter. Change the color of your crayon as often as you'd like.
- Next time you visit the public library, find out if there is a copy of a book called *Everybody Needs a Rock*, by Byrd Baylor. It is a story where a girl gives other kids ten rules for finding just the right rock. After all, everybody needs a rock!

Psalm 18 (selected verses)

I love you, God.

You are the one who makes me strong.

You are the steady rock under my feet.

You are the rock where I can hide when I am afraid.

Your way is straight and smooth.

You are a safe place for all who run to you.

You are the one true God.

You are as solid as a rock, and nothing compares to you.

I bless you, O God my rock.

By Amber Espinosa



God gave Joseph advice when he was about to do something new. Learn from that advice on how to handle a new thing in your own life!

For
Just for Kids

Season
Fall

Activity Plan

Remember, it's normal to feel nervous before starting something new. Even professional athletes and musicians get nervous before a game or performance.

1. Talk about the situation with a loved one.
 - How are you feeling about starting something new?
 - When have you felt this way before? What happened?
 - What do you think will happen this time?
 - What is the worst thing that could happen?
2. Look to God's word for guidance.
 - Read Proverbs 23:19 "Hear, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way."
 - Tell about a time when you were nervous about something new, and you decided not to do it.
 - Read Joshua 1:1-9 from your Bible (or see text on last page). Joshua had to start something new. God told him not to be afraid and promised to be with him. Is this a good time to try something new and trust God to care for you?
 - Tell about a time when you started something new, and it went well.
3. Get some good advice from a loved one.
 - Tell about something you do to help when you're nervous.
 - Check out this web site together and see if you find a tip that helps: [Tips to Calm Your Kids' Nerves](http://VibrantFaithatHome.org_Just for Kids_Help for the Hard Stuff_Starting Something New).
4. Pray this prayer before you begin your new thing!

Loving God, I know that you are with me. I trust you to take care of me, no matter what happens. Please help me to feel brave today. Amen.

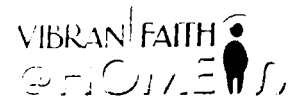


Joshua 1:1-9

After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."



Source: Vibrant Faith at Home. *Help for the Hard Stuff: Starting Something New*



By Christy Olson

Read Aidan's journal and write your own faith story in the same format.

For

Just for Kids - Faith Story

Season

Spring

Prepare in Advance

Print journal page

Activity Plan

1. Read the Journal called "House Fire"
2. Journaling can be a spiritual practice. Thinking about how things happened and who helped and where God is your life.
3. Think about an event in your life. It could be like Aidan's house fire, or it could be a sports competition, or even a new friendship. Use the journaling page to write about the event. Write a prayer at the end that connects your experience with others.
4. Write one short journal entry each day for a week. See if you can see God in your writing.



Hello, my name is Aidan. I'm nine years old.

Before the Fire

I broke my foot doing handstands against the wall when I was supposed to be asleep. I went to gymnastics and jumped on the tramp and then I complained and we went to the Doctor, my foot was broken.



Night of the fire

I was asleep with my cast, of course, and it was really annoying. My Mom picked me up and took me out and a policeman took me to the other side of the street to our neighbors. It was kinda late in the night and so we watched TV and played with toys. I didn't see the fire. A little later I looked out the neighbors window and I saw smoke, a lot of it. The fireman came out with Rocky, our lizard.

Later that night

We slept in a hotel. Kylee was sleeping in the pack-and-play. I was on the bed because I broke my foot.

The next day

We went to Haley and Hannah's farm. We knew Haley and Hannah from the Farmer's Market. They let us stay there for about a month. On the way, I saw our house. It didn't look as burned from outside. I think I saw Gavin, our cat.

The next few weeks

The people at our church fed us dinner for a whole month. Gavin was at the vet for awhile, then he came to the farm and almost caught a woodpecker.

We played on a tree at the farm. The person next door let us come and see the chickens and get some eggs. We pet sheep and helped to make fences. They had a sick cow and she died.

What Changed

Mommy and Daddy went to our house a lot and took out old stuff that could be used again. They had to rebuild the house. We moved to Utah because Daddy got a new job at school. He still goes there.

Where was faith in the fire?

Faith was in our heart. It was everywhere helping us even in our toughest moments. I saw faith in Jamie who helped and didn't have too. And Haley and Hannah gave us the farm. The policeman and the fireman helped us with the fire. The gecko even made the front page of the newspaper.

Prayer for all kids in fires

God, please help children who need everything after a fire. And help friends, family, and anybody who helps them after the fire. They might think they did something wrong but they didn't. They are worthy. Please, God, Amen.



What happened the day before?

What happened the day of the event?

What happened later in the day?

What happened the next day?

What happened the next few weeks?

What changed?

Where was faith?

Prayer for others



Source: Vibrant Faith at Home, *Kid Faith Stories: House Fire*

By Jolene Roehlkepartain

Thunderstorms. Earthquakes. Monsters under the bed. People yelling. News reports of horrific violence. Children can be frightened easily. Together, talk about fears and how to feel safe.

For
Young Family

Season
Summer

Needed

Bible, What Scares You Most worksheet (see last page), pens or pencils

Prepare in Advance

Place a bookmark in your Bible at Matthew 14:22-33. Print a copy of What Scares You Most worksheet (see last page) for each family member. Gather a pen or pencil for each family member.

Activity Plan

- 1 Say this prayer aloud to begin.

God, remind us of your presence when we feel afraid. Help us learn ways to stay safe. Amen.

- 2 Ask an older child or adult to read aloud Matthew 14:22-33 from your Bible or from the text at the end of the activity.
- 3 As a family, discuss the scripture passage:
 - Why were the disciples afraid?
 - How do you know the disciples were afraid? What did they do?
 - What is the first thing Jesus said to the disciples when he got to the boat?
 - Why do you think Jesus invited Peter to walk on the water?
- 4 Give each person a copy of What Scares You Most worksheet (see last page) and a pen or pencil.
- 5 Have each person write or draw a picture of three things that scare him or her. As an adult, be careful of what you write so that you don't add to the fears of young children. For example, if you're scared that you could lose your job or worried about a friend dying of cancer, don't write that. (Talk about adult fears with other adults.) Instead, write about fears where you know how to protect and reassure yourself, such as encountering a barking dog, driving on an icy road, or being caught in a storm.
- 6 When family members finish, have each person tell about the three things on his or her worksheet.
- 7 As a family, discuss each item listed by your child(ren). Ask, "What would help you feel safer in this situation? How can I help you feel less afraid?" Then plan actions to take to calm your child's fears. For example, a night light often helps a child who's afraid of sleeping in the dark. Or a child may feel safer by having a flashlight nearby to illuminate any scary monsters in the middle of the night. Having a family plan of action for storms or other emergencies is also a good idea.
- 8 End with prayer.

Thank you, God, for listening to our fears and helping us find ways to stay safe. Amen.



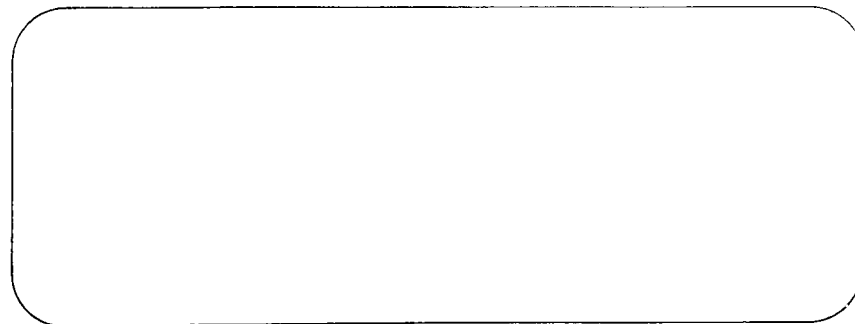
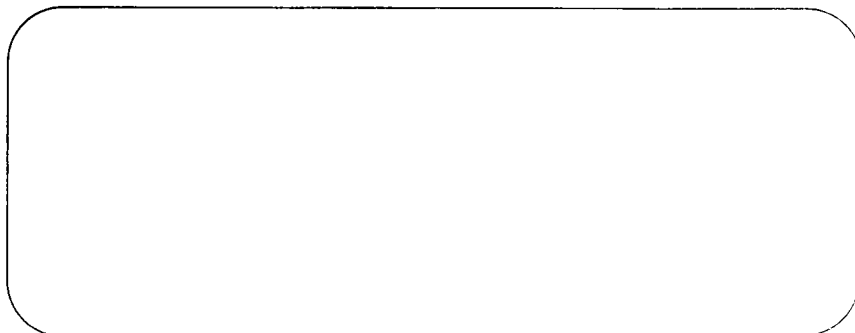
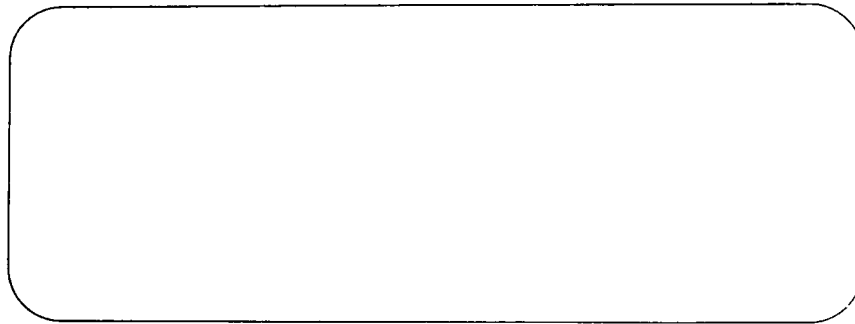
Matthew 14:22-33

²² Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³ And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴ but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. ²⁵ And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶ But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

²⁸ And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹ He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."



Write about or draw a picture of the three things that scare you the most.





By Julie Filby

Encourage one another to pray regularly, even when it's hard to think of what you want to say or you can't remember who needs your prayers. Learn to look at your hand to help you recall at least five prayer petitions or intentions.

For
Young Family

Season
Spring, perhaps on the first Friday in March (World Day of Prayer) or the first Thursday of May (National Day of Prayer)

Needed
Bible

Activity Plan

1. Gather in a comfortable space and pray aloud.

Dear God, thank you for always listening to our prayers. Amen

2. Recall that the apostle Paul taught people about living as Jesus' followers. One thing he told Christians to do was to pray every day. Open your Bible and read aloud Philippians 4:4, 6-7 or use the following text:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

3. Comment that sometimes it's hard to remember to pray or to think of what to pray about. At times like that, looking at one of your hands can be a simple guide for prayer. Offer up your prayer petitions as you wiggle each finger:

Thumb: The thumb is closest to your heart. Begin by thanking God for the people who are closest to you, including parents, siblings, grandparents and other relatives, and close friends and neighbors. Ask God to love and protect these people.

Pointer finger: The pointer finger reminds you to pray for those who teach and heal—people who "point" you in the right direction. This might include teachers, doctors, coaches, priests or ministers, and Sunday School teachers. Pray that the Spirit will give them wisdom and patience.

Tallest finger: The tallest finger reminds you to pray for those who are in charge, including leaders of your nation and area leaders like the mayor and governor. Pray that God will guide them to make wise decisions.

Ring finger: The ring finger is the weakest finger; it reminds you to pray for those who are weak, sick, hungry, or in pain. Pray that God will strengthen and heal them, and send people to care for them.

Little finger: The smallest finger reminds you to pray for yourself.



VibrantFaithatHome.org_Prayer_Hand Prayers

Source: Vibrant Faith at Home, *Prayer: Hand Prayers*

By Amber Espinosa



Lots of grown-ups are embarrassed to pray out loud, but a preschooler named Meseret can do it, and so can you! Check out her inspiring faith story, and submit your own story to be featured on Vibrant Faith @ Home!

For
Just for Kids

Season
Summer

Activity Plan

1. Prayer is our time to talk to God, and we can tell God anything. Read these verses and talk about them with a loved one.
 - Read 1Thessalonians 5:16-18 (use your Bible or see last page). These verses remind us to pray all the time, and that praying is a very important thing to do. Why do you think praying is so important?
 - Read Romans 8:24-28 (use your Bible or see last page). When we pray, we put our hope in God, even in times when it's hard to trust God. Even when we can't think of the right words, God's Spirit understands us, and prays for us. When have you found it helpful to pray? When has it been hardest for you?
2. Watch the video of Meseret and her mom talking about prayer and praying together. Watch video.
3. Find a time to pray together with someone in your family. It should be the same time every day so that it's easy to remember. Here are a few tips to get you started.
 - Each day, try telling God thank you for the best parts of the day
 - It can help to tell God something you're worried about, or feeling sad about.
 - Each day, try telling God something you hope for the world, for your neighborhood, and for your own family.



4. After you've been praying regularly for a while, take some time to notice what happens when you pray.
- How do your feelings change from the beginning to the end of the prayer?
 - What do you like about praying together?
 - What questions do you have about prayer? (Consider tackling this as a "Big Question" Here's how.)

Helpful Links

This site offers some easy prayers to try with your family:

<http://www.prayerguide.org.uk/encouragekids.htm>

Pray without Ceasing

1Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Romans 8:24-28

For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.



APPENDIX J
EXPERT REVIEW PROTOCOL
Instrument Evaluation

Name of Evaluation Tool _____

Question #	Was the Question/ Instruction Clear?	Was the Question/ Instruction Unclear?	Suggestions for Change to the Question/Instruction
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